



VICTORIA

THE WELL-BELOVED



W. F. ALIKER

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HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY, QUEEN VICTORIA.

Photo by Russell & Sons.

VICTORIA: THE WELL-BELOVED.

BY
W. FRANCIS AITKEN.

AUTHOR OF
“BADDEN-POWELL, THE HERO OF MAFEKING.”

WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS.

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*“O, hard condition, twin-born with greatness
* * * * *
What infinite heart’s-ease must kings neglect
Which private men enjoy.”*

—SHAKSPERE.

“By virtue first, then choice, a Queen.”

—WALLER.

*“A thousand claims to reverence closed
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen.”*

—TENNYSON.

PREFACE.

HERE in this little book the reader will find, it is hoped, a real clue, if not a comprehensive guide, to some of the more memorable of the personal events in the noble life which came to so beautiful a close at Osborne on the evening of Tuesday, January 22nd, 1901. Victoria the Well-Beloved, born not far from the dawn of the 19th century, witnessed the growth and development of most of its marvels and left the impress of her queenly character, her wisdom, and her sweet womanliness, upon the time. She has bequeathed to her people, as an imperishable, priceless gift, the incomparable influence of a personality that cannot but have an ever-widening effect on the future of the great nation to whose well-being she devoted her constant energies through more than sixty years; a nation which developed under her beneficent sway from less than 165,000,000 souls to about 400,000,000, and which, from occupying an area of less than 8,000,000 square miles, now counts within its borders over 11,000,000 square miles.

Whilst Britain flourished into Greater Britain, political storms and dynastic crises wrought havoc over the greater part of the civilised world. The rise of a finer ideal of womanhood is not the least of the virtues of the old century. It spread far beyond the confines of the Empire. It owes its existence to the example set by the womanly Queen who sate on England's throne. Free trade, the penny post, free education, all features of the "Record" reign, gave that amelioration to the condition of the humblest of her subjects which the Queen's first pronouncement to the people promised. Surgical science, aided by antiseptics and anæsthetics, has been the means of saving many precious lives from diseases that were once looked upon as incurable. Railways, steamships, telegraphy, telephony, and other common-places of to-day developed from theoretic stages during the Victorian age. Abroad the slave was given freedom, and missions spread enlightenment among the heathen.

To-day, as the harvest of the glorious years that have passed and gone is surveyed, gratitude cannot but mingle with the nation's grief. And in taking the survey the eye will linger on those many tender phases in the personal history of the Sovereign which it has been the object of the writer of the following pages to depict within the compass of a few hours' reading, and without trenching on that sacred ground, trespass on which drew from Tennyson so bitter a scorn of the biographer, and induced the great master of Balliol to at first deprecate the writing of the late Laureate's "Life." A useful feature of the book will, perhaps, be the inclusion of the exact text of the late Queen's touching letters and messages to those to whom she always referred as her "beloved people." The record hereafter outlined will serve to show how well the words may be applied :—

The mortal moment at last has found her,
Willing to tarry, yet glad to rest.

Whilst with us all the sentiment remains that has been so feelingly expressed in Mr. Hartold Begbie's lines :—

For ever thou shalt reign ; above our hosts
For ever shall thy glorious standard wave ;
And there shall be no shrine within our coasts,
So blest as the great Queen of England's grave."

W. F. A.

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CHAPTER I.—(1811-1819.)

Introductory—The Days of the Regency—Princess Charlotte—Duke of Kent's Marriage—Birth of Princess Victoria at Kensington Palace.

THE late Mr. Nassau William Senior, when he was in Paris in May, 1848, just before the formidable risings of that year, met M. Gustave de Beaumont (the brother-in-law of De Tocqueville), who said to him:—"In France we are not good balancers of inconveniences. As soon as we see the faults of an institution, *nous la brisons*. We should never have tolerated your Hanoverian kings with their German policy. We should have turned them out in a year. You kept them until they were acclimatised and gradually became the best royal stock in Europe. Unless we greatly improve we never shall have any permanent institutions, for as we destroy every institution as soon as we discover its faults, and as no one is free from them, nothing can last."* Queen Victoria had then been reigning eleven years, and M. de Beaumont's words forcibly remind one of the fact that where it is not marred by prejudice the French intellect is the clearest and most far-seeing in the world.

* "Journals kept in France and Italy." London : 1871.

Whilst to a certain extent explicable and pardonable, the comparative slowness of the British people to appreciate the worth of Queen Victoria is not a matter upon which the nation can pride itself. The causes of the want of absolute confidence in Her Majesty are many. They had their growth in the misgovernment by the four Georges, the weaknesses of William IV., and the political corruption which is the usual corollary of corrupt Courts.

Do you remember what Thackeray wrote of those old times? Shall we, he asked, in his essay on George IV., regard that monarch's Court "as preachers and moralists, and cry 'Woe' against the open vice and selfishness and corruption; or look at it as we do at the king in the pantomime, with his pantomime wife and pantomime courtiers? . . . It is grave; it is sad; it is the one most curious for moral and political speculation; it is monstrous, grotesque, laughable, with its prodigious littlenesses, etiquettes, ceremonials, sham moralities; it is as serious as a sermon; and as absurd and outrageous as Punch's puppet show."

But it was unlike Thackeray not to take the larger view—which we to-day cannot take, if we confine ourselves uncritically to Greville,* or, what would be infinitely worse, read seriously such "histories" as that to which the name of Lady Anne Hamilton,† the companion of Queen Caroline, has been attached. Thackeray thanked God, as we may, that while our eyes turn away shocked from "the monstrous image" of "the first gentleman in Europe," they "may see in that England over which the last George pretended to reign, some who merit indeed the title

* Charles Cavendish Fulke Greville (1794-1865) was Clerk of the Council in Ordinary. His "Memoirs," edited by Mr. Henry Reeve, C.B., appeared between 1875 and 1887, in three instalments. London: Longmans.

† See "Dictionary of National Biography," Art. "Hamilton, Anne."

of gentlemen ; some who make our hearts beat when we hear their names." And Thackeray, though he says "gentlemen," had thought, as the context of his essay shows, of gentlewomen too.

The leaves of a nation's history are never blotted out, else might those old scandalous records well be forgotten in tribute to the queenly woman and womanly queen one of whose first acts as sovereign was to pay her father's debts, and who from the moment of her accession steadily and unflinchingly did her utmost to take the hidden sting from such praise as lies in the exclamatory avowal that "But for Victoria, by the grace of God, these Guelphs had made us all Ghibellines." At least, let us soften the acerbities of diarists like Greville with the gentler recollections * of men like the late Dr. John Stoughton. Dr. Stoughton could speak of George III. without uncharitableness, and tell with kindly feeling the story of William IV. toasting his guests at Brighton in sailor fashion, and then, after remarking that his seafaring pursuits hardly fitted him for a throne, pointing to the Queen (Adelaide) and adding that "for any improvement in his ways he was indebted to that good lady." While truth must prevail, palatable or unpalatable, it were well that we have the whole of it, even in Court chronicles.

To the student of the Queen's life and reign the thought becomes dominant of the existence of a definite purpose in human history. Where else shall we find more striking records of blighted hopes and thwarted ambitions so near the throne taking new heart and fresh aspiration to the task of preparing another for the place whereon the original hopes and ambitions had been centred ? But the theme is for the philosophic historian. Elsewhere too than in these pages must the reader look for a full

* "Recollections of a Long Life." London : Hodder and Stoughton, 1894.

description of the condition of England in the years immediately preceding the birth of Queen Victoria. One cannot, however, forbear from remarking how differently English history might have been written ! Could they have foreseen Elizabeth's refusal to marry, the nobles of her time, probably, would not have permitted Anne Boleyn's daughter to ascend the throne. Had Princess Charlotte not broken off her engagement with Prince William of Orange in June, 1814, or had the Princess Victoria fulfilled the desire of her uncle, William IV., and married Prince Alexander of the Netherlands—what then ? "What might have been" none can tell. "What was," in the days of the Regency, is only too plain. The soldiers were "scum of the earth ;" food for powder, in the popular phrase, as the children of the poor were fuel for the factories. Bread was a luxury. Popular education was left to a few Blue Stockings and to Robert Raikes. British mothers grafted republicanism in their children's minds. Woman was never more the chattel of father and husband than under the law of the Regency. Confidence in the Crown and faith in Parliament were not to return till much water had flown under the bridges on its way to the sea.

The heart of London had been touched by the persecution of Princess Caroline. The unhappy childhood of her daughter, the Princess Charlotte, impelled the citizens to a chivalrous partisanship ; and this feeling was heightened when it became known that the Princess had refused the hand of the hereditary Prince of Orange, because marriage with that Prince would have meant exile from the people she might be called upon to govern. When another suitor came in Prince Leopold, son of the Duchess of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld (who was afterwards to exert so happy an influence over the Princess Victoria), better days seemed about to dawn, both for Princess Charlotte and for England. The marriage took

place on May 2nd, 1816, at Carlton House. Claremont, Lord Clive's beautiful mansion at Esher, in Surrey,* was prepared as a summer residence. Marlborough House was fitted up as a house in town. Time danced along in the eighteen happy months ensuing, but it was a dance of death. On November 5th, 1817, Princess Charlotte died, a few hours after giving birth to a still-born son. In the rude but expressive words of the old rhyme,

"Never was sorrow more sincere,
Than that which flowed round Charlotte's bier."

Unhappy Princess! During the last supreme moment, she, whom an unnatural father had deprived of a mother's care, had no matronly heart or hand to soothe her suffering. She was buried in St. George's Chapel, at Windsor, on November 19th, 1817. Three months later her medical attendant shot himself.

Queen Victoria, who always evinced the keenest interest in the tragic story of Princess Charlotte, expressly desired the publication of the work which is to-day the standard biography of the Princess.

The Princess, it is recorded, was devotedly attached to the Duke of Kent, and had desired to see the marriage which took place in the year following her long and deeply lamented death.

Edward Augustus, Duke of Kent, fourth son of George III., and father of Queen Victoria, was born at Buckingham House on November 2nd, 1767. He had a distinguished military career. His bravery at Martinique and Santa Lucia, in 1794, made his name a standing toast. His faults as a commander

* Claremont, built in 1768 by Lord Clive, on the site of Sir John Vanbrugh's residence, cost £100,000. It was assigned to Prince Leopold and Princess Charlotte, in 1817, placed by Leopold, in 1848, at the disposal of Louis Philippe, and was granted to Queen Victoria for life by Parliament in 1865. In 1882 the Queen purchased the reversion of the property for £73,000.

were those of the disciplinarian. They were partly the effects of his training, partly called out by the laxity of military discipline as he found it. His first tutor, afterwards Bishop Fisher, was a man of admirable parts. But at the age of eighteen his pupil was sent to Germany under the care of another tutor, who sent home to the King, his father, the most misleading reports concerning the conduct of his charge. The tutor, moreover, behaved despicably in regard to money over the expenditure of which he had control.

In 1799 Edward Augustus was created Duke of Kent and Strathern and Earl of Dublin. For a year he fulfilled the difficult post of Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in North America. In 1805 he was raised to the rank of Field Marshal. He lived for a time in semi-solitude at Ealing, interesting himself in many philanthropic works. He belonged to the Whigs, and was altogether a man of broad views and just conceptions. He was among the first to attempt to raise the educational status of the British soldier, and to abolish the degrading “triangle.”

It was, however, almost inevitable that the Duke of Kent should fail to live free from debt. But he did all he could honestly to pay his creditors, and in view of lessening his expenses he in 1815 left England to take up his residence on the Continent. Whilst abroad he met Victoria Mary Louisa, the widowed Princess of Leiningen. The Princess, who was born at Coburg on August 17th, 1786, was the fourth daughter of Francis, Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, and brother of Prince Leopold. She was left a widow in 1814 with a son (Prince Charles) and a daughter (Princess Feodor); against neither of the lovers had scandal a stone to throw.

The Duke of Kent and the Princess of Leiningen were married at Coburg on May 29th, 1818. They came to England, and on June 11th the ceremony

was repeated at Kew simultaneously with the wedding of the Duke of Clarence (afterwards William IV.) and the Princess Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen.

For financial reasons the Duke and Duchess of Kent returned to the Castle of Amorbach, one of the homes of the Leiningens. But when, in the early spring of 1818, the Duchess was about to become a mother, it was decided to come to England once again. The journey, which was taken in April, was in those days a formidable as well as a costly undertaking. But the Duchess was of one mind with her husband, and a friendly loan settled the monetary difficulty. The travellers came by way of Calais, where there was weary waiting by reason of unfavourable weather. However, the journey was accomplished without mishap. The Duchess, it is worthy of note, brought with her in Dr. Charlotte Siebold one of the first women to hold a medical degree. She declined to be attended by a male physician.

The Duke and Duchess of Kent occupied the lower south-eastern apartments beneath the King's Gallery in Kensington Palace,* and here at 4.15 by the clock on the morning of Monday, May 24th, the Duchess gave birth to a princess. Outside the home circle not much attention was paid to the event, but the Privy Council attended. Of the papers which chronicled the birth only one made a comment, and that one used the word "unlikely" in relation to the possibility of the infant succeeding to the throne, having regard to "the age and the robust health of the Duke of Clarence." *The Annual Register* of 1819 dismissed the news in five lines.

At the time the Duke of Kent's chaplain, Dr. Thomas Prince, a Fellow of Wadham, was staying

* On a gilt plate fixed above the mantelpiece of the room in which the Princess was born is this inscription:—"In this room Queen Victoria was born May 24th, 1819."

in Brussels, and thence addressed a letter of congratulation to His Royal Highness. The Duke replied, dating his letter from Kensington Palace, June 7th:—

“ MY DEAR SIR,—I receive with gratitude your obliging and friendly congratulations on the happy event which has made me the father of a fine and healthy child, but at the same time that I assure you how truly sensible I am of the kind and flattering attentions of those who are prompted to express a degree of disappointment for the circumstance of that child not proving to be a son instead of a daughter, I feel it due to myself to declare that such sentiments are not in unison with my own, for I am decidedly of the opinion that the decrees of Providence are at all times wisest and best; that had I felt any essential grounds for it (which I do not) I would not have admitted feelings of disappointment or distrust to have entered my mind upon an occasion like the one in question. But the fact is I see no reason to wish the case otherwise, except as far as private inclination might dictate; for while I have three brothers senior to myself, and one possessing every reasonable prospect of having a family, I should deem it the height of presumption to believe it probable that a future heir to the crown of England would spring from me. If it should, however, please Providence so to order it otherwise, I should then feel it a subject of proud boast; but till then I seek to draw my happiness from the pure sources of present domestic comfort rather than from the vain anticipations of future greatness. I am sure a little reflection on your part will lead you to receive these assurances as the natural result of existing circumstances, and to value them accordingly.

“ With sincere regards and esteem,

“ My dear Sir,

“ Yours faithfully,

“ EDWARD.”

Whilst the Duke of Kent was penning this epistle at Kensington, his infant daughter's no less happy maternal grandmother was in Coburg writing those significant words: “The English like queens,” and not a hundred miles from Coburg—in the summer residence at Rosenau of the Duchess of Kent's eldest brother, Duke Ernest of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld—the time was approaching for an event of the first importance to the infant daughter just referred to, to the Empire over which she was destined to rule, and to the world at large.

CHAPTER II.—(1819-1826.)

Naming the Baby—Nearly Shot—Death of the Duke of Kent—George IV.'s Accession—Early Training—Rosenau and Kensington—First Visit to Windsor.

SMALL as, it would appear, was the belief in the possibility of the child of the Duke and Duchess of Kent ascending to the throne “where Alfred sate,” precedent, as we have seen, ordained the attendance of the Privy Councillors of the Prince Regent on the occasion of her birth. So precedent ordained certain ceremonial for her baptism, which took place in the Grand Saloon of Kensington Palace on Thursday, June 24th. The Royal gold font was brought from the Tower. The none too gorgeous apartment in which the rite was carried out was hung with crimson velvet curtains from the Chapel Royal, St. James's.

There were three sponsors—the Tsar Alexander, the Queen of Wurtemberg (Princess Royal of England), and the Duchess of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld. The three were represented respectively by the Prince Regent, the Princess Augusta (sister of the Queen of Wurtemberg), and the Dowager-Duchess of Gloucester. Gossip has lent colour to more or less sensational stories current concerning the ceremony. It is said that the Prince Regent desired that one name only should be given to the child, and that this name should be “Alexandrina,” after the Tsar. “Let there be another name,” said her father. Prince George suggested “Georgina.” The Duke of Kent proposed “Elizabeth.” Then the Prince Regent is said to have somewhat angrily interposed with the words: “Am I never to have my wishes respected? If she cannot be ‘Georgina,’ certainly

she shall not be 'Elizabeth.' Call her after her mother, 'Victoria,' but remember, this name must not precede the Emperor's." So the little Princess was baptised Alexandrina Victoria, and the dinner in honour of the event lacked nothing in harmony by reason of the absence of the Regent.

Very soon the chill associations of Kensington Palace were left for the sad but at all events sunnier surroundings of Claremont, the residence of the widowed Prince Leopold, where in August Princess Victoria was successfully vaccinated, being the first member of the Royal family to undergo this operation.

When the Princess was seven months old, her parents journeyed to Woolbrook Cottage, Sidmouth, which the owner, General Baynes, placed at the Duke of Kent's disposal at a nominal rental. The Royal travellers stayed for a day or two at Salisbury. Here they were entertained at the Bishop's Palace, and at certain hours it was possible for callers to see the Princess. One evening the Bishop's daughter went to the nursery at bedtime to see little Victoria undressed, and was surprised to find the Duchess of Kent performing that office for her baby, whom, it is worthy of note, she nursed herself.

A few days later, on January 4th, 1820, in Sidmouth, the Princess Victoria had her first escape from an untimely death. A small boy, the son of a Devonshire farmer, having gained possession of a gun, entered the grounds of Woolbrook Cottage and fired at some birds that were in a tree near the nursery. The charge broke the glass of the window, and passing just over the head of the sleeping child, then in the nurse's arms, one of the pellets lodged in the nurse's shoulder. Great alarm ensued, and the Duke of Kent hastening forth, the young culprit was promptly captured. But so intense was the joy experienced at the providential escape of the Princess, that the lad was forgiven on faithfully pledging himself to better conduct in the future.

The Duke of Kent, writing to a friend soon after this startling incident, said: "My little girl thrives under the influence of a Devonshire climate, and is, I am delighted to say, strong and healthy; too healthy, I fear, in the opinion of some members of my family, by whom she is regarded as an intruder."

Alas! the shadow of sorrow was already being cast over the happy household. On January 20th the Duke of Kent, who was fond of walking, went out in the wintry weather despite the cold he had contracted at Salisbury. On his return, ignoring the fact that his boots were wet and his clothes damp, he went straight to the nursery and played there with his little daughter for upwards of an hour. The same night he was taken seriously ill with inflammation of the lungs. He had been advised by his physician to abandon his walking exercise for a time. This disregarded advice was sounder than the methods adopted for his cure appear to have been. The doctors prescribed large quantities of calomel and antimony, and took 120 ounces of blood from the patient's veins. The Duchess of Kent was left a widow and her child an orphan on the evening of Sunday, January 23rd, 1820. The Duke's remains were taken to Windsor and there interred in the vault beneath what is now the Albert Memorial Chapel. The body was first brought to Kensington Palace, whither mother and child were accompanied by Prince Leopold.

Princess Augusta, sister of the Duke, writing to a friend after her brother's death, penned these pathetic words:—"Think, that yesterday five weeks he was . . . so happy with his excellent, good wife, and his lovely child; and within so short a time he was perfectly *well—ill—and no more!* . . . God knows what is for the best, and I hope I bow with submission to this very severe trial; but when I think of his poor, miserable wife, and his innocent, fatherless child, it really breaks my heart. She has conducted

herself like an angel, and I am thankful dearest Leopold was with her. . . . She quite adored poor Edward, and they were truly blessed in each other; but what an irreparable loss he must be to her." One of the Duchess of Kent's warmest friends during this severe trial was the Duchess of Clarence (afterwards Queen Adelaide). But her relations with her late husband's brothers were far from friendly, and she was as a stranger in a strange land. "Pecuniarily her chief legacy from her husband consisted of his debts, which the allowance made to her by Parliament was not sufficiently ample to enable her to pay."

Six days after the death of the Duke of Kent George III. passed away, and the Prince Regent became King. His refusal to permit his wife to participate in the coronation ceremony (July 19th, 1821) may be cited as an indication of the conditions of Court life at this period.*

Now began that strict and careful training at Kensington Palace, which, whilst not unaccompanied by happy moments (to which the Princess Feodor, her half sister, contributed not a little), was never looked back upon by the Queen with feelings of unalloyed pleasure. "The Queen's earliest recollection," Mr. Holmes tells us in his official *Life of Her Majesty*,† "is that of crawling on the floor on an old yellow carpet at Kensington Palace, and playing with the badge of the Garter belonging to Bishop Fisher, who, as Bishop of Salisbury, was then Chancellor of the Order." She was often cheered by the people who saw her at the windows of the Palace in her mother's arms, and these popular demonstrations are said to have been the cause of no little annoyance to the father of the late

* The uncrowned Queen died a few weeks after her husband's coronation.

† "Queen Victoria." By Richard R. Holmes, F.S.A. London : Boussod, Valadon, 1897.

Princess Charlotte. Meanwhile, bearing in mind the difficulties then existing in the despatch of letters, there went on what may be described as a constant correspondence between the Duchess of Kent, Prince Leopold, and their kinsfolk on the Continent. The mother of the Duchess, in announcing to her the birth, on August 26th, 1819, of Prince Albert, at Rosenau (a function at which Dr. Siebold assisted), wrote in glowing terms of the boy-child, and went on to speak of what his cousin, the "May-flower" of Kensington—"a dear little love," whom "Siebold cannot sufficiently describe"—would be in a year's time. Besides, the baby prince at Rosenau had the enthusiastic praise of his mother—that mother whom he never saw after he was about five years old. Albert was of extraordinary beauty, this impartial historian declared; he had great blue eyes, dimples on each cheek, three teeth, and—this at eight months old—was beginning to walk.

"What a compensation," wrote Mrs. Oliphant,* "lies in this sweet babble of childhood—for women's hearts at least! For both the poor ladies who wrote of their children had troubles enough! The one in England had to hold her own with modest courage in face of the criticism and doubtful friendliness of a foreign society, in face of poverty and loneliness. The other was on the brink of a complete separation from home and children.† A dark background, full

* "Queen Victoria: a Personal Sketch." By Mrs. Oliphant, Cassell, 1900.

† Prince Albert's parents, the Duke and Duchess of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, separated in 1824. In 1826, there was a divorce, but not before the Duchess had established a hold upon the affections of her two sons, which, although they never saw her again, remained with them to the last. Albert, the second son, was her special favourite. One of the first gifts he made to his cousin, Victoria, was a little pin he had received from his mother. The Duchess, who possessed great beauty, combined with sweet and fascinating manners, died at St. Wendel, in Switzerland, in 1831, aged 32, after a long and painful illness.

of human trouble and sorrow, thus spread behind the two angelic heads that looked out wondering, with blue eyes wide open, upon the world. But nothing could be more charming and touching than this baby pair, destined to each other from their cradles, and with so much hope and so many plans already moving over their innocent heads."

Another royal lady on whom fortune frowned, Princess Adelaide, Duchess of Clarence, after she had lost her second child in 1820,* wrote to the Duchess of Kent: "My children are dead; but your child lives, and she is mine too."

In a letter to Miss Hannah More, dated July 21st, 1820, Mr. Wilberforce (the philanthropist who did so much to bring about the abolition of the slave trade) wrote: "In consequence of a very civil letter from the Duchess of Kent, I waited on her this morning. She received me with her fine animated child on the floor by her side with its playthings, of which I soon became one."

Towards the close of her second year, the little Princess was taken out daily in Kensington Gardens in a pretty pony phæton. Those who saw the Princess at this time called her "a beautiful child," and remarked on her likeness to her father. Though small and delicately formed she was very plump. Her eyes were large and blue, her complexion was extremely fair with a rosy colour, her curled lips when parted disclosed her white teeth. One lady wrote of a visit to the widowed Duchess: "The child is so noble and magnificent a creature that one cannot help feeling an inward conviction that she is to be Queen some day or other."

Soon after the coronation of George IV. in July, 1821, the Princess and her mother went to Bognor, and there the future Queen had her first bath in sea

* Princess (afterwards Queen) Adelaide had only two children —both girls. One lived but a few hours, the other only three months.

water, sea baths being prescribed by the Duchess's medical advisers. The home life at Kensington was severely simple. The family met at breakfast at 8 a.m. in the summer time, the Princess Victoria having her bread-and-milk and fruit put on a little table by her mother's side. After breakfast the Princess Feodor studied with her governess, Miss Lehzen the daughter of a Hanoverian clergyman and the Princess Victoria went out for an hour in the gardens. Then came play in the nursery. Her nurse was a Mrs. Brock, whom she used to call her "dear, dear Boppy." At two came a plain dinner, whilst the Duchess took her luncheon. When the evenings were fine the whole party would sit on the lawn under the trees. At the time of her mother's dinner the Princess had supper by her side. At nine she went to her bed, which was placed next to that of the Duchess.

Contrary to the generally accepted story it now appears that whilst the Duchess of Kent cultivated self-denial, self-respect, courtesy, truthfulness, and all the moral virtues in her daughter, she did not give the Princess any scholastic instruction, and the time for regular lessons of the school-room was delayed till the Princess was in her fifth year. This was in accordance with the advice of her grandmamma of Coburg, who urged the Duchess of Kent "not to tease her little puss with learning whilst she was so young." Grandmamma of Coburg came to England in 1824, the autumn of which year was spent at Claremont. These visits were frequently repeated by the Princess's maternal grandmother.

Claremont was a happy alternative to Kensington Palace. Writing to her uncle Leopold* from

* Prince Leopold, who shared with the Dowager Duchess of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld the view that Prince Albert and Princess Victoria might marry, and was devoted to, as he was beloved by, both Prince and Princess, was in 1831 elected King of the Belgians. In 1829 he married (morganatically) Caroline Bauer



QUEEN VICTORIA AT SIX AND EIGHT YEARS OF AGE.

(The first after a painting by W. Fowler, and the second by A. Stewart.)



Claremont, in 1843, the Queen recalled these happy days. "This place," she said, "brings back recollections of the happiest days of my otherwise dull childhood, when I experienced such kindness from you, dearest uncle. . . . Victoria [the Princess Royal] plays with my old bricks, etc., and I see her running and jumping in the flower garden, as *old* (tho' I feel still *little*) Victoria of former days used to do."

The Princess, who delighted in her outdoor rides and games, was especially fond of meeting and (whenever this was possible) of talking with other children. As to her playtime within the Palace, her dolls have been the subject of at least one large volume. These, in the later years of her childhood, were named after her relatives and famous historic characters, and dressed most scrupulously according to the rank of the originals. All the ladies wore brilliant wigs of real hair, and these the Princess dressed and braided with her own hands, having a special set of toilet brushes for the purpose.

In 1824 the Rev. George Davys (afterwards Bishop of Peterborough) was appointed elementary tutor to the Princess, and Miss Lehzen* was at the same time made her governess.

In 1826, at the invitation of the king, Princess Victoria made her first acquaintance with Royal Windsor. His Majesty was living then in the Royal lodge in the Park. One day the King entered the drawing-room, holding his niece by the hand. The band was playing in the adjoining conservatory. "Now, Victoria," said His Majesty, "the band is in the next room, and shall play any tune you please. What shall it be?" "Oh, Uncle King," quickly

(obit. 1878), and in 1832 was wedded to Louise, daughter of Louis Philippe. He died December 10th, 1865, having won distinction as "Juge de Paix de l'Europe."

* Miss Lehzen, who was created a baroness by George IV., remained with the Queen till 1842, when she left England for Germany, where she died in 1870.

replied the Princess—the story is repeated in Mr. Holmes's “Life”—“I should like ‘God save the King.’” Another time His Majesty asked her what she had enjoyed most during her stay in Windsor. “The drive I took with you, Uncle King,” was the answer, the king having himself driven her in his pony phaeton, in company with the Duchess of Gloucester.

One may here fittingly add what Mrs. Oliphant describes as a prettier instance of the Princess's infallible instinct of good manners. “At a children's ball given by the Duke of Gloucester, little Princess Victoria, running after her uncle, the Duke of Sussex, as he was leaving the room, cried, ‘Won't you give me a kiss before you go?’ When the Duke stooped to do so, the Princess hurriedly whispered in his ear, ‘You have forgotten to say “Good-night” to mamma.’” The instinct was none the less charming because in this case it was guided by affection.

During 1826 the Queen was taken by her mother to Tunbridge Wells, Ramsgate, and Malvern. At the first-named place her pony ran away with her, but was stopped by a plucky lad, and the Princess was none the worse for her adventure.

CHAPTER III.—(1827-1830.)

A Parliamentary Grant—Stories of the School-room—A “First Great Sorrow”—“The Two Little Queens”—William IV.’s Accession—“I will be Good”—Baroness Lehzen’s Reminiscence Revised—Queen Adelaide and the Princess.

ON January 5th, 1827, at the Duchess of Rutland’s house in Arlington Street, the Duke of York died childless. From this time forward the Princess was generally regarded as England’s future Queen. Parliament voted an annual grant of £6000 to the Duchess of Kent for the education of her daughter, who now had several masters, to teach her music, singing, dancing and deportment, drawing, and languages. To gratify the Princess’s early love of music the Duchess sent for a little girl called Lyra to play at the Palace. Lyra was only five years old, and was one of a sad race, few of whom seem to attain mature distinction. She was an “infant prodigy.” Whilst the child musician was playing, and the Princess apparently a rapt listener, the Duchess left the apartment for a few moments. On her return she found the harp silent. Her daughter had induced the juvenile minstrel to quit her instrument for a more truly childish pastime. The two children were discovered side by side on the hearthrug in a state of high enjoyment, surrounded by the Princess’s toys, from which the heiress of England was making the most liberal selections for her companion’s acceptance.

Here is another music story by way of contrast. The music teacher had been so far taxed by the inattention of his Royal pupil that he at length ventured to remark that there was no royal road by

which she could make herself mistress of music. Governess Lehzen concurred, whereupon the Princess jumped up, closed and locked the piano and ran off holding up the key. "You see," she cried, "there is 'a royal road' by which I can make myself mistress of the piano."

The Princess was fond of flowers, and wont to listen attentively whilst her uncle Leopold, who was a student of botany, instructed her in the rudiments of that science. The Earl of Albemarle, who was at Kensington in attendance on the Queen's studious uncle, the Duke of Sussex, has described the Princess as he saw her in 1826: "One of my occupations on a morning whilst waiting for the Duke, was to watch from the window the movements of a bright, pretty little girl, seven years of age. She was in the habit of watering the plants immediately under the window. It was amusing to see how impartially she divided the contents of the watering-pot between the flowers and her own little feet. Her simple but becoming dress contrasted favourably with the gorgeous apparel now worn by the little damsels of the rising generation—a large straw hat, and a suit of white cotton; a coloured *fichu* round the neck was the only ornament she wore."

Her tutor, Mr. Davys, had one day been preaching from the text, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," when the Princess asked, "Do not men reap anything but what they sow?" "Yes," answered the clergyman, "if they allow someone to come and sow tares amongst their wheat." "Ah! I know who that 'someone' is," said the Princess, "and must keep him at arm's length." "At 'arm's length' only, Princess?" asked the tutor. "Well, if I keep him there he won't do much harm," was the prompt reply.

On another occasion when the Princess Victoria was reading Roman history she came to the passage

relating how a noble lady visiting the mother of the Gracchi displayed, after the custom of her time, a casket of precious stones, and asked the Roman matron to show her jewels for comparison, whereupon Cornelia introduced her sons with the words, "These are my jewels." Pausing in her lesson, the Princess raised her eyes from her book and remarked, "She should have said 'my Cornelians.'" The stones referred to by the Princess were much affected at the time, and it is conjectured that she numbered some among her ornaments.

On May 19th, 1828, Sir Walter Scott dined with the Duchess of Kent, and was presented by Prince Leopold "to the little Princess Victoria—the Heir Apparent to the House as things now stand. This little lady," he added in his journal, "is educated with much care, and watched so closely that no busy maid has a moment to whisper 'You are the Heir of England.' I suspect if we could dissect the little heart we should find that some pigeon or other bird of the air had carried the matter." Sir Walter was not mistaken.

Breakfast was frequently taken in the open air, and the practice taught the young Princess not to shrink from the public gaze. Charles Knight left in his "Passages of a Working Life" the record of a pleasing memory. As he one morning passed along the broad central walk of Kensington Gardens, he saw "a group on the lawn before the Palace, which to my mind was a vision of exquisite loveliness. The Duchess of Kent and her daughter, whose years then numbered nine, were breakfasting—a single page attending upon them at a respectful distance, the matron looking on with eyes of love, whilst the fair, soft English face is bright with smiles." Adds the chronicler, "I passed on and blessed her, and I thank God that I have lived to see the golden fruits of such a training."

In 1828 the Princess Victoria "experienced her

first great sorrow." She lost her playfellow, the Princess Feodor, who in the year indicated was married to Prince Hohenlohe-Langenburg.

On May 28th, 1829, the King gave a juvenile ball in honour of Donna Maria da Gloria, the child Queen of Portugal. It was at this ball that the Princess Victoria first experienced the attractions of a Court festival. Charles Greville relates in his caustic "Memoirs" that when George IV. "talked of giving the child's ball Lady Maria Conyngham said, 'Oh, do; it will be so nice to see the *two little queens* dancing together,' at which His Majesty was beyond measure provoked." One who witnessed the ball-room scene declared that "the elegant simplicity of the attire and manners of the British heiress formed a strong contrast to the glare and glitter around the precocious queen."

On Saturday, June 26th, 1830, George IV. died, leaving only one life, and that of a man sixty-five years old, between Princess Victoria and the throne. How did the Queen come to know of the great future before her? It is said by one authority that in the spring of 1830 she was reading English history in the presence of her mother and governess Lehzen, when she asked, "If the King were to die, who would be presumptive successor to the throne?" Her mother parried the question by saying, "The Duke of Clarence would." "Yes, I know," said the Princess; "but who would succeed him?" The governess, after a little hesitation, reminded her that she had several uncles. "But," said the Princess, "my papa was next in age to my uncle Clarence, and it *does* appear to me from what I have just been reading that when he and the present King are dead I shall become Queen of England." The governess remained silent. The Duchess said she hoped that the Duchess of Clarence might have children. But if she did not her little Victoria would become the Queen. Then, adds the chronicler, "the child became grave and agitated

throughout the rest of the day, and exhibited no sign of pleasure or levity."

This narrative was, until 1897, when Mr. Holmes's book appeared, practically superseded by the story told by the Baroness Lehzen in a letter addressed by her to the Queen on December 16th, 1867, from which the following is an extract:—"I ask your Majesty's leave to cite some remarkable words of your Majesty, when only twelve years old, while the Regency Bill was in progress. I then said to the Duchess of Kent that now, for the first time, your Majesty ought to know your place in the Succession. Her Royal Highness agreed with me, and I put the genealogical table into the historical book. When Mr. Davys was gone the Princess Victoria opened as usual the book again, and seeing the additional paper, said, 'I never saw that before.' 'It was not thought necessary you should, Princess,' I answered. 'I see I am nearer the throne than I thought.' 'So it is, madam,' I said. After some moments the Princess resumed, 'Now, many a child would boast, but they don't know the difficulty. There is much splendour, but there is more responsibility.' The Princess, having lifted up the fore-finger of her right hand while she spoke, gave me that little hand, saying, 'I will be good. I understand now why you urged me so much to learn even Latin. My aunts Augusta and Mary never did; but you told me Latin is the foundation of the English grammar, and of all the elegant expressions, and I learnt it as you wished it. But I understand all better now'; and the Princess gave me her hand, repeating, 'I will be good.' I then said, 'But your Aunt Adelaide is still young, and may have children, and of course they would ascend the throne after their father, William IV., and not you, Princess.' The Princess answered, 'And if it was so I should be very glad, for I know by the love Aunt Adelaide bears me how fond she is of children.'"

As Mrs. Oliphant finely expresses it : " It is seldom that a scene like this stands out so distinctly in the early story of a life destined to greatness. The hush of awe upon the child ; the childish application of this great secret to the abstruse study of Latin, which was not required from the others ; the immediate resolution, so simple, yet containing all the wisest sage could have counselled, or the greatest hero vowed, ' I will be good,' make a perfect picture. It is the clearest appearance of the future Queen in her own person that we get through the soft obscurity of those childish years. The same hand which placed itself so solemnly in the anxious guardian's hand to give weight to the simple vow, inscribed long afterwards, in full maturity, a few words of recollection upon the margin of this narrative. ' I cried much on hearing it,' writes the Queen. No further words are needed to enhance the effect of the touching scene."

Mr. Holmes, however, points to the mistake made by Baroness Lehzen regarding the age of the Princess in 1830, and adds : " The Queen says that the knowledge of her probable succession came to her gradually and made her very unhappy ; nor does she feel sure that she made use of the expression ' I will be good.' "

" The knowledge . . . made her very unhappy." Secluded as her mother might keep the little Princess from the unhealthy atmosphere of a corrupt Court, it is unlikely that as the child grew in years she was kept ignorant of the sufferings of her father, who was " severely tried by injustice and misfortune," whilst it must have been impossible to hide from her quick blue eyes the treatment accorded her mother.

In the *Quiver* for January, 1897, Mr. A. T. Story tells us that when seven or eight years of age the Princess one day set her heart on a doll she saw in a shop window. Her current allowance, however, was

spent, and her mother did not permit the purchase till the next allowance of pocket money became due. Then as she was hurrying from the shop with her purchase her eyes caught the expression of misery in the face of a tramp standing near, who, when the Princess stopped and spoke to him, told her tremblingly that he would not ask for help were he not ready to sink with hunger. "He looked famine from his eyes." The Princess, who had spent all her money on the doll, said, "I am so sorry, I have no money or else —." The man's lips trembled forth a humble "Thank you, lady," then he shuffled on his way, hunger impersonated. "Stay!" murmured the little owner of the new doll. There was a quiver in her childish voice and a moisture in her eyes as she spoke. "Wait a minute, please." She stepped back into the shop, approached the lady behind the counter, and said, "Oh, please, do you mind taking the doll back and keeping it for a few days longer?" "Certainly," replied the shop-keeper, "and you wish me to return you the money?" "Yes, if you please." This was done, and the little lady, hurrying out of the shop, placed the whole of the money in the hands of the starving man. He was like one thunderstruck. . . . "If," he murmured, "the Almighty made you a queen it would not be more than your goodness deserves." According to Mr. Story it was this remark that led the Duchess of Kent to tell her daughter for the first time of the probability of her succession to the throne.

Before passing on to the subject of the Regency Bill just alluded to, a word or two may be said with reference to the prolonged carriage tour made by the Duchess of Kent and her daughter in 1830. Visits were paid to Blenheim, Stratford-on-Avon, Warwick, Leamington, Birmingham, and Malvern. At Malvern a brief stay was made, during which the Princess attracted the warm admiration of an elderly dame,

by whose cottage she drove in her little phæton, drawn by two Highland ponies. The old lady stood upon the threshold, clasped her hands together, and exclaimed, "God bless you, sweet Princess. May you live to be Queen of England!" The Princess, it is stated, stood up in her carriage, bowed gracefully, and replied, "I thank you, madam."

Walking one day on the downs with a little pet dog, the Princess went ahead of her mother and governess and entered into conversation with a little peasant maiden, whom she asked to carry her dog. The two went along chatting together until the girl declared that she could not carry the dog any further and had to go to her aunt's. "Who is your aunt?" asked the Princess. "Mrs. Johnson, the miller's wife." "And where does she live?" "At that white house at the bottom of the hill." "I will go with you, so let us run down the hill together," said little Victoria—"an innocent Haroun al Raschid making her little researches into the life of the people." But the Duchess and Baroness Lehzen came up to the children and stayed the adventure. When the peasant girl heard her little companion addressed as Princess her astonishment was considerable. The Duchess of Kent thanked her for carrying the dog and gave her half-a-crown, which was afterwards framed and hung up in the miller's parlour.

After Malvern the royal travellers visited Hereford, Worcester, Badminton, Gloucester and Bath. At the residence of Mr. Watson Taylor, East Stoke Park, the Princess saw Thomas Moore, the Irish poet, who wrote in his diary:—"The Duchess sang a duet or two with the Princess Victoria, and several very pretty German songs by herself. I also sang several songs, with which Her Royal Highness was much pleased." The pilgrimage was continued to Stonehenge, Salisbury, and Portsmouth.

The Regency Bill, introduced in Parliament on

November 15th, 1830, obtained the Royal assent on December 23rd. It appointed the Duchess of Kent Regent in the event of King William's death during Princess Victoria's minority, providing Queen Adelaide did not give birth to a posthumous child, and provided the Duchess married no foreigner during the Regency. In 1831, when the King prorogued Parliament, Queen Adelaide and the Princess watched from the windows of the Palace the progress of the royal procession. The people cheered the Queen lustily, but, forgetting herself, that gracious lady took her niece by the hand, and leading her forward, introduced her to her future subjects.*

* "Life of Queen Victoria." By G. Barnett Smith.

CHAPTER IV.—(1831-1835.)

The Queen's English—Around Old Steyne—A First Pantomime—Death of the Dowager Duchess of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld—An Incident at Cumnor—First Public Act—Queen Adelaide's Prophecy—At Ascot—Confirmation—The Duke of Cumberland's Plot.

IN the early part of 1831, a statement was issued relative to the Princess Victoria's studies. It appeared from this that she spoke French, German, and Italian fluently, knew enough Latin to translate Horace and Vergil, had some acquaintance with Greek, and had attained the higher stages of mathematics. But she was deficient (according to those who were called upon to judge) in her knowledge of the English language, which, "owing to her studies having till lately been carried on through the medium of German teachers she speaks but indifferently and with a strong German accent." The Duke of Wellington and others passed some severe comments on this report, the animus in which was perhaps accentuated by a diplomatic trouble with Prussia. When the Princess became aware of what was being said, she cried bitterly, and said to Mr. Davys, "It is not my fault or my wish. How can people speak so cruelly? I will learn, I want to learn English—it is my language. I will try hard, and you must help me to succeed." Before this it is on record that when the Princess, who had a natural faculty for languages, was in a perverse mood she objected to speak either French or German, saying, "I am an English girl, and I shall speak nothing but English."

Henceforth, English was made as far as possible the language of the royal home circle as well as the

medium of the Princess's studies. At the King's instance the annual allowance of £6000 for the Princess's education and maintenance was raised to £16,000. It was also by desire of the King that the Premier, Earl Grey, proposed that the Bishop of Lincoln should be appointed to preside over the education of the heiress presumptive, but the Duchess said she was perfectly satisfied with the capacity of Mr. Davys. When it was retorted that a dignitary of the Church ought to hold the office she rejoined: "There can surely be no difficulty in preferring Mr. Davys to the position of a dignitary of the Church." In the result, Mr. Davys was (in January, 1831) preferred to the Deanery of Chester. Simultaneously, Charlotte Florentia, Duchess of Northumberland, a grand-daughter of Lord Clive, was appointed State Governess. The Duchess of Northumberland had no share in the actual work of teaching the Princess. It was her duty to accompany Her Royal Highness when she appeared in public or at Court. And these appearances, England's "Sailor King" was determined should be far more frequent than they had been hitherto.

A recent writer* says:—"Never was a child so carefully prepared for the most exalted station. There is an old print which shows the Princess Victoria walking demurely with her mother in the King's Road, Brighton. Already she is hedged about by the divinity of regal persons, for although she can be no more than fourteen, she is a state presence in her quaint little costume; she does not take her mother's arm as an ordinary daughter, but walks a little in front of the Duchess of Kent, who appears to be suggesting with indefinable tact the pride of the mother and the deference of the subject. More than that, there is about this little

* *The Speaker*, May 20th, 1899.

group of mother and child (with a crown hovering over her small head) and respectful ladies-in-waiting an atmosphere of severe domestic propriety.

"Among the onlookers there must be many who were familiar with the wild times of the Regency at Brighton. The associations of the Fourth George still clung to the sea breezes of that merry spot, and the reigning presence of the Fourth William had scarcely improved the moral tone. What a rebuke to all that tradition even the most flippant spectator must have perceived in the little Princess and her train in the King's Road! How many frivolous memories of disreputable dandies and fashionable demireps must have shrivelled up in and around Old Steyne at the approach of this procession! Yes; that sight in the King's Road in the early thirties must have hinted strongly to the shrewd observer that the monarch in the person of that small child would some day take an entirely new lease of the popular affections and obliterate the dubious gaieties of her immediate predecessors.

"There was nothing dubious in Kensington Palace. Here the Princess Victoria was sheltered not only from the Court, to which her mother refused to take her, but also from the miscellaneous traditions of bygone Courts at Kensington. . . . She could roam about the Palace and hear no rustle of illicit draperies revisiting the scenes of frailty. It was something for an English monarch in the pupil stage not to light upon traces of Nell Gwynne. No Stuart had left any mark in Kensington Palace which could not be reconciled with the strictest propriety. There was poor dear Anne, with her red face, her absurd husband, her multitude of children who could not be kept alive, her silly masquerade between Mrs. Masham and Mrs. Freeman. Not much harm could come to any girl who studied the superior chamber-maid gossip of Kensington Palace in Anne's day. Henry Esmond complained that Beatrix was

corrupted by the Court. ‘She listened to much free talk’; but that talk has left no echoes in the home of Queen Victoria’s childhood. There was another Stuart there, Mary—Duteh William’s Mary—a very different Mary from the siren who lost her head at Fotheringay. She had no romantic charm to eommend her to a youthful imagination. She was wedded to a erabbed inearnation of stateeraft. She had not even the good fortune of her sister Anne who, without any graees of mind, is immortalised by one of the efflorescent ages of English literature. Still, Mary has the pathos of a daughter who sat on the throne of an exiled father; the pathos of a wife, whose early death left her grim eonsort a broken man. . . . Was the Prineess Victoria allowed to meditate on these things?”

In January, 1831, the Prineess visited a theatre—Covent Garden—for the first time. The production was a pantomime. The following month she attended her first Drawing Room. The scene is said to have been one of the most splendid ever remembered at Court. Nothing like it had been witnessed sinee the presentation of Prineess Charlotte on the oeeasion of her marriage. The Prineess—who, it is to be remembered, was not yet twelve years old—was dressed very simply in white, her dress being entirely of English manufaeture. Her sole ornaments were a pearl neeklace and some diamonds worn in her hair. “She much enjoyed the ceremony, and henceforward attended the Drawing Rooms twiee a year.”

About this time the Prineess exhibited symptoms of an hereditary affeetion of the knees and ankles. A medieal authority wrote in June, 1831:—“The tendency of these attacks is so enfeebling that an opinion has been expressed that, in ease the young Prineess should grow stout and heavy, like the rest of her family, the idea of her walking must be given up. I perceive, therefore, with great pleasure, that Her Royal Highness has been walking in the park

this week, and I myself saw her alight from her carriage with a tolerably firm step." The physicians advised country air and surroundings, where the Princess "could get as much outdoor exercise as possible." Here we seem to have a reasonable explanation of the much and acrimoniously discussed absence of the Duchess of Kent and the Princess Victoria from the Coronation ceremony on September 9th.

In August, mother and daughter journeyed to the Isle of Wight, where a stay of two months was made. A tourist happened upon the Duchess and the Princess in the old churchyard of Arreton, where Elizabeth Wallbridge, the heroine of Leigh Richmond's story, "The Dairyman's Daughter," was buried. The two were seated upon a grassy mound, the Princess "reading aloud in a full melodious voice the touching tale of the Christian maiden."*

It is known now that in addition to her studies in Hindustani, under the Moulvie Rafiuddin Ahmad, the Queen read or had read to her the works of Shakespeare, Walter Scott, Tennyson, and Adelaide Procter. To the hymns of Bonar and Faber she was especially attached. Her favourite novelists were all women — Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, Mrs. Oliphant, Mrs. Craik, George Eliot, and Edna Lyall. In German literature the Queen's favourite writers were Schiller, Goethe, and Heine. In the literature of France to the charm of Sully and St. Simon the Queen was keenly alive. Among French poets and dramatists, her favourites were Racine, Corneille, and Lamartine. To her love for the two great classics (a *Quarterly Review* not long since

* Her Majesty told Heinrich von Bülow, the Prussian Ambassador, in 1838, "that as Princess Victoria she had not read a single novel, but that since her accession she had read three—one by Sir Walter Scott, one by Cooper, and one by Bulwer."

observed) her Majesty probably owed the remarkable purity, both in idiom and choice of words, with which she spoke the English language.

On leaving the Isle of Wight the Princess and her mother went to Claremont, where her uncle Leopold was staying. While here the sad news reached them of the death of the Dowager Duchess of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld. The Queen (according to Mr. Holmes) believed that whatever powers of mind and talents she might have possessed were principally inherited from her maternal grandmother.

The following year was memorable for the long tour made by the Princess and her mother, between the beginning of August and the beginning of November, through the Midlands, into Wales, and back *via* Chatsworth, Alton Towers, Newell Grange, Wytham Abbey and Oxford. The Princess presented the prizes at the Beaumaris Eisteddfod. She witnessed the formal opening of the bridge over the Dee at Chester, which was named after her. She laid the foundation-stone of the boys' school at Plas Newydd.

Whilst staying at Wytham Abbey, near Oxford, the Princess often rode out in the pleasant Berkshire lanes on her pony, accompanied by her dogs; she occasionally galloped on ahead of the other members of her party. One day, when near Cumnor, she heard one of her dogs yelp in pain, and saw a rough-looking under-keeper kick the animal, which had entered a field. In a moment the Princess rode up to the man with the exclamation, "How dare you!" and laid her riding-whip twice across his face with all her strength. At that moment the Duchess and the Earl of Abingdon rode up, astonished and alarmed at the unwonted scene, of which they at once inquired the meaning. The man, recognising the Earl, stammered out an apology, with the explanation that he thought it was a stray dog. The Duchess turned to the Princess and said, "He was

wrong to kick your dog, but you were equally wrong to so forget yourself, Victoria." The Princess looked at the wealed face of the man for a moment and then at her dog, which was crouching near her pony, and then said, "No, mamma ; he deserved it, and I will not beg his pardon." At Oxford the Princess was shown over the Bodleian, and "took great interest in Queen Elizabeth's Latin exercise book, which the Virgin Queen used when thirteen years old, the Princess's own age." At the University Press she was presented with a Bible and a memento of her visit printed on white satin.

It is noted in the Queen's diary that during this tour she dined about seven o'clock with her mother and the other guests. On her return to London in November, Captain (afterwards Sir George) Bark, who was preparing to start on the Ross search expedition to the North Pole, was summoned to Kensington Palace, where he explained to the Princess his plans and the problems involved in Arctic exploration. The Princess was an attentive listener, and never afterwards lost interest in the subject.

On May 24th, 1833, on the completion of her fourteenth year, the King and Queen gave a juvenile ball at St. James's Palace in honour of their royal niece. His Majesty led the Princess into the ball-room and later into the supper-room, when she sat between their Majesties, her health being proposed by King William. On the 28th she was present at a Drawing Room, and commented in her diary on the "good looks" of several of the ladies present, noting amongst others the Hon. (and unhappy) Mrs. Norton. The Princess visited the Opera, and (we are told on the thoroughly excellent authority of Her Majesty's present librarian at Windsor) enjoyed the dancing of Duvernay and Taglioni, and listened with delight to Pasta, Malibran, Grisi, Tamburini, Rubini, and other celebrated singers, as well as to Paganini's playing on the violin.

In June a journey was made to the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich. Mr. Holmes gives a picturesque account of the visits paid by the Duchess and her daughter in July and August, 1833, to various places of interest and importance on the south-west coast. The royal party voyaged from port to port in the yacht "Emerald." One finds the Princess referring in her diary to "the dear 'Emerald' and her excellent crew."

On Saturday, August 3rd, 1833, England's heiress presumptive performed her first public act in presenting colours to the 89th Regiment, at Plymouth. On the following day she attended a service in Plymouth Dockyard Chapel. It had been expected that at the military ceremony on the Saturday the Princess would herself speak or read an address; and some disappointment was felt when the Duchess spoke for her. Ministerial journals, which cannot be said to have been guilty of excessive courtesy to the Duchess, hinted that her daughter "was still afraid of her English."

At Portsmouth the Princess and her mother went on board Nelson's old flagship, the "Victory." A contemporary news writer tell us that the Princess and the Duchess "tasted some of the men's dinner at one of their mess tables, and did like the fare." The whole ship, the Princess noted in her diary, "is remarkable for its neatness and order." On the occasion of a visit to the Eddystone, after lunch on board the "Forte," the sailors danced a hornpipe and the Royal party a quadrille and a country dance.

The next year was a comparatively quiet one. The Princess attended the Royal Musical Festival in Westminster Abbey. In the summer she visited Tunbridge Wells and St. Leonards, and with her mother was present at the harvest dinner given by the Earl and Countess de la Warr to the servants employed on the estate at Buckhurst. The Earl, taking up a glass of ale, proposed "The King!" and

then announced that the Royal visitors desired to toast "The Peasantry of England." The Duchess and the Princess each honoured this toast amidst great applause on the part of the assembly. It was on the Princess's birthday in this year that Southey, then Poet Laureate, wrote the lines—

"When regal glory gems that brow
So humble, meek and gentle now,
May England's haughty foemen bow,
And England's children brave
The glory of their name and vow—
The lords of land and wave ! "

Following the Drawing Room at St. James's Palace on Thursday, March 5th, 1835, there was a dinner party, which the Princess and her mother attended. During conversation, the Queen remarked on the changes which might be made by the accession of a young Sovereign, and turning to her niece said, "You see what we are forecasting about you, 'Drina!'" "Ah, yes," the Princess is said to have replied; "but it may never be. I am sure I do not wish it, dear Aunt Adelaide." "I know, child," said the Queen, musingly, "I know you are not ambitious. But I am certain you *will* be queen, and I fancy in a shorter time than anyone expects." These few words made a deep impression upon the Princess.

In June the Princess for the first time attended Ascot Race meeting, and attracted much notice as she accompanied the King and Queen in the State procession. Mr. N. P. Willis, an American sentimental penciller, who had a considerable vogue in his day, was present on this occasion, and jotted down his impressions. "In one of the intervals," he wrote, "I walked under the King's stand and I saw Her Majesty the Queen and the young Princess Victoria very distinctly. They were leaning over a railing listening to a ballad singer, and seeming as much interested and amused as any simple country folk could be . . . The Princess is much better

looking than any picture of her in the shops, and for the heir to such a crown as that of England unnecessarily pretty and interesting. She will be sold, poor thing ! bartered away by those dealers in Royal hearts, whose grand calculations will not be much consolation to her if she happens to have a taste of her own." Mr. Willis, looking to the history of the Court life of the Georges, may have been justified in drawing out a deduction as he does in the closing part of the quoted paragraph. But nicely balanced deductions often, and sometimes happily, find refutation in events as well as do "the best laid plans," and the sentimental was, happily for England, a bad prophet.

On July 30th, 1835, the Princess was confirmed at the Chapel Royal, St. James's. The Archbishop of Canterbury officiated. The scene is described as a very touching one. On the following Sunday in the private chapel at Kensington Palace she received the Holy Sacrament for the first time from the hands of her tutor, the Dean of Chester.

Towards the close of the year—which was further made memorable by the plot to secure the succession for her uncle of Cumberland†—the Princess was in the north of England visiting (amongst other places) Burghley, where the Marquis of Exeter gave a grand ball in her honour. Greville says, "Three hundred people were at the ball, which was opened by Lord Exeter and the Princess, who after dancing one dance went to bed."

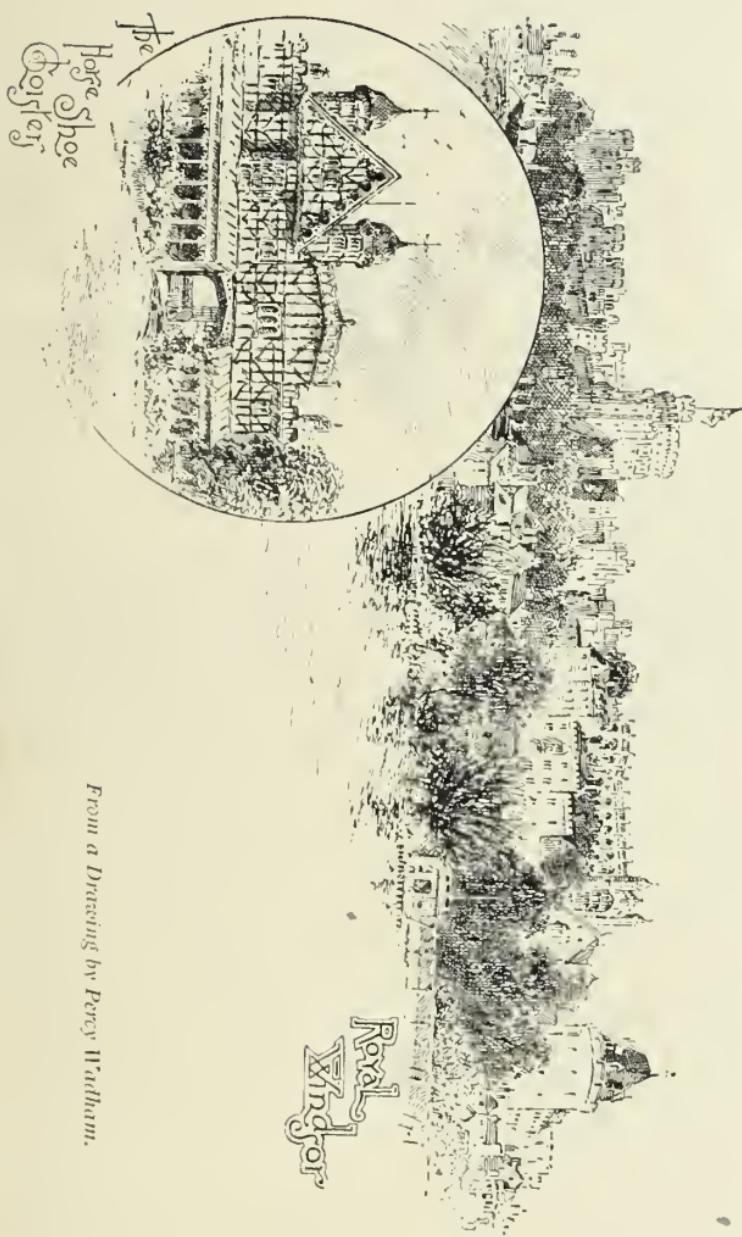
† Failing the Princess Victoria, the Duke of Cumberland would have been the next heir. When his niece ascended the throne Hanover was separated from the British crown, and he became King of that country. Here in England he was cordially disliked. If he had succeeded to the British throne and carried out here the policy he adopted in Hanover, "he would," says Mrs. Fawcett in her "Victoria" (1895), "have brought the whole fabric of the monarchy about his ears."

CHAPTER V.—(1836-1837.)

First Meeting with Prince Albert—Passages from Two Diaries—Tokens of Remembrance—Coming of Age—A Birthday Serenade—First Public Speech—Death of William IV.—State of Politics and Social Conditions—A Queen at eighteen.

IN May, 1836, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha (as he was now termed, after the demise of Duke Frederick of Saalfeld-Gotha) and his two sons visited England; and the Princess Victoria for the first time saw her future husband. The visit was brought about by King Leopold. The visitors were cordially received by William and his consort and spent a busy time in seeing all they could in London and the neighbourhood. Her Majesty thus records her impressions of the visit:—“The Prince (Albert) was at that time much shorter than his brother, already very handsome but very stout, which he entirely grew out of afterwards. He was most amiable, natural, unaffected and merry—full of interest in everything—playing on the piano with the Princess, his cousin,—drawing—in short, fully occupied.” He always paid the greatest attention to all he saw, and the Queen remembered well how intently he listened to the sermon preached in St. Paul’s when he and his father and brother accompanied the Duchess of Kent and the Princess there, on the occasion of the service attended by the children of the different charity schools. It is, indeed, rare to see a Prince, not yet seventeen years of age, bestowing such earnest attention on a sermon.*

* “The Early Years of H.R.H. the Prince Consort, compiled under the direction of Her Majesty the Queen, with notes by the Queen.” By Lieut.-Gen. the Hon. C. Grey, 1867.



From a Drawing by Percy Wadham.



Prince Albert wrote on June 1st, 1836: "My first appearance was at a *levée* of the King's, which was long and fatiguing, but very interesting. The same evening we dined at Court, and at night there was a beautiful concert at which we had to stand till two o'clock. The next day the King's birthday was kept. We went in the middle of the day to a Drawing-Room at St. James's Palace, at which about 3800 people passed before the King and Queen and the other high dignitaries to offer their congratulations. There was again a great dinner in the evening, and then a concert which lasted till one o'clock. You can well imagine that I had many hard battles to fight against sleepiness during these late entertainments. The day before yesterday (Monday) our aunt gave a brilliant ball here at Kensington Palace, at which the gentlemen appeared in uniform and the ladies in so-called fancy dresses. We remained till four o'clock. The Duke of Wellington was among the guests." The Prince continued: "Yesterday we spent with the Duke of Northumberland at Sion, and now we are going to Claremont. Dear aunt is very kind to us and does everything she can to please us, and our cousin also is very amiable."

"The curious reader," as Mrs. Oliphant says, "would like to know how often the cousins danced together, and if each felt the charm and attraction of the other amid all the music and the mirth." We know that Prince Albert gave his cousin a little simple ring on her birthday, a present which was justified by the fact that "her brother," the Prince of Leiningen, had made her a similar gift.* And we know further that almost simultaneously with the departure of the Prince from England, King Leopold spoke to his niece on the subject of his wishes, and

* "The Story of the Life of the Prince Consort; revised by the Queen." By W. W. Tulloch, 1887.

in writing to him on June 7th the Princess concludes with these words :—“ I have now only to beg you, my dearest uncle, to take care of the health of one now so dear to me, and to take him under your special protection. I hope and trust that all will go on prosperously and well on this subject, now of so much importance to me.”

On his side the Prince (to quote the words of Sir Theodore Martin*) was “ still kept in the dark”—that is to say he had no reason to believe that a marriage between himself and the Princess Victoria was being pressed forward as anything more than a family aspiration. At the same time the plan of his education, with a view to the possibility of his being called to fulfil the duties of Prince Consort, was carried into effect under the guidance of King Leopold and his trusty adviser, Baron Stockmar.† Whilst on his travels Prince Albert sent “ little tokens of remembrance to his cousin at Kensington—such as a flower gathered on the Righi, a book of prints to show his route, and other trifles ; very natural, simple tokens of a delicate amity, perhaps to float away altogether with the morning mists, perhaps to ripen into warmer emotion, such as arises every day between youth and maiden hovering upon the verge of life.”

On May 24th, 1837, the Princess Victoria attained her legal majority—the completion of her eighteenth year. Those who were privileged to be near the person of the young Princess (we learn from the *Globe* of this date) were early astir in their preparations, and in the grey dawn, hurrying figures along

* “The Life of H.R.H. the Prince Consort.” 5 vols., 1877-1880. London : Smith, Elder.

† Born 1787 ; entered service of Prince Leopold in 1816 as private physician ; became private secretary and controller of his household ; was at Princess Victoria’s right hand immediately before and after her accession ; a close student and admirer of the English constitution ; he died in 1863.

the streets of Kensington showed that something out of the ordinary was in progress. It was not till 6 a.m., however, that the keynote of the day's rejoicings was struck in the cheers that greeted the Union Jack as it fluttered up above the old church. At the same moment was unfurled to the morning breeze over the red brick gables of Kensington Palace a flag, a happier omen than dreamed even the heartiest of those who cheered it as it rose—a "splendid flag," as the *Globe* described it, of silk of "virginal white," on which was embroidered in "ethereal blue" the legend, "Victoria." A few minutes later, the gates of the "palace in a garden" were opened to admit the thronging public, and shortly after strains of joyous music broke upon the air. "At seven o'clock, Mr. Rodwell, composer to Her Royal Highness, and Mr. J. Weippert, Her Royal Highness's harpist, accompanied by their friends, Wilson, Sequin, Robinson, E. Land, Giubilei, etc., assisted by a select band of wind instruments and harpers, serenaded the young Princess. . . . The performance took place on the terrace, immediately under Her Royal Highness's window. The serenade, 'Wake, Royal Maiden,' was honoured by a command from their Royal Highnesses for its repetition." The words of the ode, written by Mrs. Cornwall Baron Wilson, were prophetic:—

"Wake, Royal Maiden, from soft repose,
As zephyr awakes the unfolding rose ;
So we, like the bards of the olden day,
Would greet thee with music and minstrel lay.

"Oh, fear not our numbers shall break on thy slumbers,
To sing of the graces that smiled on thy birth ;
More fragrantly breathing the flowers we are wreathing
Shall emblem thy virtues and garland thy worth.

"Like a vision-wrapt sage,
Fancy pierces the gloom
Of Time's distant page,
Which thy deeds shall illume ;

And though years may pass ere the tablet of fame
 Shall be bright with the records that blazon thy name,
 Yet Britannia, prophetic, beholds the proud day
 When the sceptre of freedom Victoria shall sway ;
 The vision is bright as her own natal day :
 Awake, Rose of England, and smile on our lay."

The serenade was followed by some pretty verses, setting forth the claims of the Princess's mother to a chief share in the honours of the occasion :—

“ Minstrels of a free born land,
 Let one thrilling note repay
 Her whose fond maternal hand
 Reared the fairest Flower of May.

“ Her's the toil of anxious years,
 Her's the glory of this day,
 Her's a nation's grateful tears,
 For the fairest flower of May.”

With a glee “ Victoria's Natal Day,” the serenade was brought to a close. “ At eight the church bells commenced a merry peal, which was continued at intervals during the day.” As the hours sped on they brought many visitors to congratulate mother and daughter, and many rich presents also, amongst the latter being a handsome pianoforte valued at two hundred guineas, the gift of the King, “ who earnestly wished to see his niece of age before his death.” Tuesday was observed as a holiday in London; neither Lords nor Commons sat that day. “ Within four hours' ride of the Metropolis thirty-eight public dinners attended by Members of Parliament” were held. At night the city was brilliantly illuminated. A grand State Ball was given at St. James's Palace, at which the Princess for the first time took precedence of her mother, to whom she is said to have whispered, “ I should enjoy this thoroughly if only Uncle William and Aunt Adelaide were here.” The King was confined to his couch by indisposition, and the Queen remained in attendance upon her royal spouse. The ball was opened by Princess Victoria, who danced with Lord Fitzalan,

the eldest son of the Duke of Norfolk, and also with Prince Esterhazy.

One of the thirty-eight Metropolitan banquets deserves special notice. "The inhabitants of Lambeth" assembled at the Horns Tavern, Kennington; Mr. Clay, M.P., presided, and many M.P.s attended. In giving the toast of "The Princess Victoria," the Chairman said the acclamation with which her coming of age had been received was the homage of a free people—of men who knew their rights, and were prepared on all fitting occasions to maintain them; but were also prepared to render due respect and to tender the fullest and most loyal affection to the Sovereign." He concluded:—"When in the fulness of time that illustrious Princess should be called upon to ascend the throne of her ancestors she would—and he in his heart was confident she would—obtain that best title to the crown, viz., the confidence, the respect, and the affections of the people." Mr. Sheil, M.P., who is described as "a fervid representative of the grievances of the distressful country," concluded an eloquent outburst with "a touching picture of that morning's greeting between the Royal mother and daughter. Of the mother, 'Do you not believe,' he said, 'that she laid her hands upon the head of her Royal girl, and that, raising up her eyes to God, she prayed that the Almighty might make that good and gentle daughter the means of felicity to that Empire which she is destined to govern ?' (Great cheers.) And of the daughter, 'Do you not also believe that, whilst that prayer was being offered, the child looked in the mother's face with tears (for of joy as well as of sorrow tears are the indication) and that she mingled her prayers with the maternal orison that she may live to gladden her mother's heart by becoming a blessing to the British people ?'" Mr. C. P. Villiers, the last of the then House of Commons to pass away, proposed "The Duchess of Kent, and may

she live to see her maternal cares rewarded by the affections of her daughter and the gratitude of the nation."

Six days later the Lord Mayor and other civic dignitaries went in state from the Guildhall to Kensington Palace to present congratulatory addresses. In replying to the address to herself the Duchess of Kent said:—"The Princess has arrived at that age which now justifies my expressing my confident expectation that she will be found competent to execute the sacred trust which may be reposed in her; for communicating as she does with all classes of society, she cannot but perceive that the greater the diffusion of religious knowledge and the love of freedom in a country, the more orderly, industrious, and wealthy is its population, and that with the desire to preserve the constitutional prerogatives of the Crown ought to be co-ordinate the protection of the liberty of the people."

The Duchess is reported to have added these words:—"If I consulted my own feelings I should abstain from a reply, except to assure you my heart is filled with gratitude. I feel, however, that I should add a few words more, as what I say on this occasion may reach many who take a lively interest in the event you congratulate me on; and as this is probably the last public act of my life, I feel called on to do so. I pass over the earlier part of my connection with this country. I will merely briefly observe that my late regretted consort's circumstances and my duties obliged us to reside in Germany. But the Duke of Kent, at much inconvenience, and I, at great personal risk, returned to England that our child might be born and bred a Briton. In a few months afterwards my infant and myself were awfully deprived of father and husband. We stood alone, almost friendless, in this country. I could not even speak the language of it. I did not hesitate how to act. I gave up my home and my kindred to devote

myself to that duty which was to be the object of my future life."

The Princess Victoria in replying to the address to herself made her first public speech. She said:—“I am very thankful for your kindness, and my mother has expressed all my feelings.” The speech was greeted with an outburst of enthusiastic cheers, and next day all London was in love with those few sweet simple words spoken by one who was, all unknowingly but a few weeks distant from the throne.

The birthday celebrations referred to in the preceding chapter had scarcely ended before it became evident that King William IV. was slowly and surely dying. The newspapers of the period disclose the bitterest political hatred;* and the economic condition of the country was a sad one. Scarce seven years had passed since the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832. Hodge still eked out his existence by the help of the Poor Rates, which in England and Wales were returned as £6,000,000 per annum. Artizans in the north worked for three-pence and fourpence per diem. Bread cost tenpence half-penny the four pound loaf. Relief was sought by means of Chartism (which demanded universal suffrage, vote by ballot, abolition of property qualification, equalisation of electoral districts, triennial Parliaments, and payment of members), rick burning, and machine breaking. In Ireland O’Connell was at once fostering agitation for the repeal of the Union and keeping it from running into rebellion. The streets of London echoed the refrain of a popular song, “Old England is going down the hill—down the hill.” On the other hand in the newly passed Poor Law Amendment and Corporation Acts, the commutation of tithes, the General Registration and Civil Marriage Acts, and the

* An informative summary, from the able pen of Mr. H. S. Glass, appeared in the *Independent* of April 22nd and 29th, 1897.

reduction of the Stamp Tax on newspapers from four-pence to one penny, were the seeds of improvement.

On June 19th the *Times* predicted that the affairs of the realm would "be in a beautiful mess" ere long, and went on to express a hope that the future sovereign might be enabled to "cut her leading strings," and know how to distinguish "between interested advisers, those who counsel only to betray, and those only who have her welfare at heart." The leading journal further accused the Duchess of Kent of exercising undue influence over her daughter. On the following day—June 20th, on which date the King died—the *Morning Post* thus referred to the statements in the *Times* :—"A morning paper that pretends to call itself Conservative thought fit yesterday to indulge in a torrent of senseless invective and malicious insinuations against an illustrious and exemplary member of the Royal Family of England—a woman : a woman, too, who, in addition to her share in the common affliction with which the Royal Family was immediately threatened, had grounds for deep and painful anxiety in the important changes about to take place, peculiarly and exclusively her own. . . . What does the *Times* mean by imputing to the Duchess of Kent at such a moment as the present the project of forming a Kent-Coburg Cabinet under the auspices of the Earl of Durham?" The *Morning Advertiser*, in expressing the hope that "for the sake of human nature there may be few who would lend themselves to the specially diabolical attempts to cause dissension between parent and child," dared the *Times* to be more explicit in its statements ; and a day or two later the *Times* retorted by calling the *Advertiser* "a pot-house newspaper," and the *Post* "the manual of seamstresses and the housemaids' guide to fashion."

Leaving for the present the acrid atmosphere of Fleet Street in 1837, one turns with relief to the oft-told story of the circumstances attending the Queen's

accession. It is a romantic story. But it has been told so often and so well that one ventures upon a fresh recital of the details with considerable apprehension lest something that is vital be lost in the telling.

King William IV. passed away at Windsor at 2.12 a.m. on Tuesday, June 20th, 1837, having received the Sacrament from the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Twenty minutes later the Primate (Dr. Howley) with the Lord Chamberlain (the Marquis of Conyngham), and the King's physician (Sir Henry Halford), each in his own carriage started for Kensington Palace as rapidly as horses could take them. As the clock was striking five the carriages dashed up to the Palace gates, and a vigorous assault was made on knocker and bell-pull—without avail till nearly half an hour had expired. Then a drowsy servitor appeared, and after some parley, ushered the visitors into one of the rooms. Here their patience was again put to too severe a test, and they had to set a bell pealing once again, whereupon a domestic came to them, and was informed that they desired an immediate audience of the Princess Victoria. Again there was a delay which led to a further appeal to the bell rope. Then Lady Mary Stopford, the Princess's personal attendant came, and observed that the business, whatever it might be, that brought the gentlemen to the Palace would have to wait. "For the Princess," said Lady Mary, "is in such a sweet sleep that I do not dare to disturb her."* Whereupon the Lord Chamberlain exclaimed, "Madame, we are here to see THE QUEEN on business of State, and even Her Majesty's sleep must give way to that." The attendant sped away in a state of tremulous excitement, and within a few minutes the Queen came into the room, a shawl thrown over her

* "The Diary of a Lady of Quality." By Miss Wynn.

dressing gown, her feet in slippers, and her hair falling down over her shoulders. She had been wakened by the Duchess of Kent, who, writes Mr. Holmes, told Her Majesty she must get up. "She went alone into the room where Lord Conyngham and the Archbishop were waiting. The Lord Chamberlain then knelt down, and presented a paper announcing the death of her uncle to the Queen, and the Archbishop said he had come by desire of Queen Adelaide, who thought the Queen would like to hear in what a peaceful state the King had been at the last." "She went alone into the room"—and one of her first acts was to ask the Archbishop to pray for her. As Mrs. Oliphant has written of this scene, it "never fails to touch the imagination, and no doubt when it is farther off across the levels of history it will form a dazzling point in the narrative of the next Macaulay who arises to commemorate the centuries past. It was the first great emergency which had ever occurred in the life of the carefully trained and closely guarded Princess, and she had to meet it unaided."

One of the young Sovereign's first acts when the messengers had departed was to write to her aunt Adelaide a letter, which she addressed "To Her Majesty the Queen." "One of those remembrancers who are always at the ear of royalty, dazzled, perhaps, by the new glories, and pleased to recall them at every moment, whispered, 'Not the Queen, the Queen-Dowager.' . . . The new Majesty turned impatiently from the suggestion. 'I know that,' she said, 'but I will not be the first person to remind her of it.' "*

* According to Greville, "Conyngham, when he came to her with the intelligence of the King's death, brought a request from the Queen-Dowager that she might be permitted to remain at Windsor till after the funeral, and she has written a letter couched in the kindest terms begging her to consult nothing but her own health, and to remain at Windsor just as long as she pleases."

At nine o'clock Lord Melbourne had an audience of Her Majesty. Later a number of members of the Privy Council (together with Lord Melbourne) had an audience of the young Queen "to present a loyal address of fealty and to offer homage" to the new Queen. Mr. Lennard, who was then acting as private secretary to his father, the chief clerk of the Council office, has given an account of the ceremony. In the ante-chamber to which the Councillors were introduced, six persons at most were present, amongst whom were the Duke of Sussex and the Duke of Wellington. Subsequently about a dozen ministers, prelates and officials were admitted, when the doors were closed. The address was read aloud and signed by the Duke of Sussex, and then by the others present, after which the doors were opened, "disclosing a large state saloon, close to whose threshold there stood unattended a small, slight, fair complexioned young lady, apparently fifteen years of age. She was attired in a close fitting dress of black silk, her light hair parted and drawn from her forehead; she wore no ornament whatever on her dress or person. The Duke of Sussex advanced, embraced, and kissed her—his niece, the Queen. Lord Melbourne and others kissed hands in the usual form, and the usher taking the Address closed the folding doors, and the Queen disappeared from our gaze. No word was uttered by Her Majesty or by any present, and no sound broke the silence which seemed to me to add to the impressive solemnity and interest of the scene. Crabb Robinson, the diarist, chronicles a charming incident:—"The Bishop of London told Amyot that when the Bishops were first presented to the Queen she received them with all possible dignity and then retired. She passed through a glass door, and, forgetting its transparency, was seen to run off like a girl as she is . . . This is just as it should be. If she had not now the high spirits of a girl of eighteen

we should have less reason to hope she would turn out a sensible woman at thirty."

The first great Council Meeting, pictured by Sir David Wilkie, took place at eleven o'clock. The Queen, who had been accompanied to the adjoining room by her mother, was met by her uncles, the Dukes of Cumberland and Sussex, who introduced her to the Council Chamber, where she took her seat on a chair at the head of the table. Greville supplies a graphic description of what followed. The Queen's extreme youth and inexperience, and the ignorance of the world concerning her (says Greville) "naturally excited intense curiosity to see how she would act on this trying occasion, and there was a considerable assemblage at the Palace, notwithstanding the short notice which was given . . . She bowed to the Lords, took her seat, and then read her speech, in a clear, distinct and audible voice, and without any appearance of fear or embarrassment. She was quite plainly dressed and in mourning.

"After she had read her speech and taken and signed the oath for the security of the Church of Scotland, the Privy Councillors were sworn, the two Royal Dukes (of Cumberland and Sussex) first, by themselves, and as these two old men, her uncles, knelt before her, swearing allegiance and kissing her hand, I saw her blush up to the eyes as if she felt the contrast between their civil and their natural relations, and this was the only sign of emotion which she evinced. Her manner to them was very graceful and engaging; she kissed them both, and rose from her chair and moved towards the Duke of Sussex, who was farthest from her and too infirm to reach her. She seemed rather bewildered at the multitude of men who were sworn, and who came one after another to kiss her hand; but she did not speak to anybody, nor did she make the slightest difference in her manner or show any in her countenance to any individual of any rank, station or party. I particularly

watched her when Melbourne and the Ministers and the Duke of Wellington and Peel approached her. She went through the whole ceremony—occasionally looking at Melbourne for instruction when she had any doubt what to do, which hardly ever occurred—with perfect calmness and self-possession, but at the same time with a graceful modesty and propriety particularly interesting and ingratiating. When the business was done she retired as she had entered . . . Peel said how amazed he was at her manner and behaviour, at her apparent deep sense of her situation, her modesty, and at the same time her firmness. She appeared, in fact, to be awed but not daunted, and afterwards the Duke of Wellington told me the same thing, and added that if she had been his own daughter he could not have desired to see her perform her part better." Earl Grey and Lord Palmerston in their letters give similar testimony to the young Queen's native dignity and self-possession.

It was at this first Council that the Queen made known her intention of using only the name of her mother Victoria (then quite a novel name to English ears) as her name regnant and as her one and only signature.

Sidney Smith, preaching at St. Paul's Cathedral on the Sunday following William IV.'s death, expressed the hope that first and foremost she should lend her mind to the serious consideration of the education of her people, and exhorted Her Majesty to place herself earnestly and courageously on the side of peace.

CHAPTER VI.—(1837.)

The Proclamation at St. James's—"God Save Thee, Weeping Queen"—A Touching Story—First Speech from the Throne—At Windsor—Coronation—"The Bedchamber Plot."

ON Tuesday, June 21st, 1837, the Queen journeyed to St. James's Palace for the time-honoured Grand Council, and to present herself to the people; meanwhile the heralds proclaimed her accession to the throne. Greville tells us that at the Council Her Majesty "presided with as much ease as if she had been doing nothing else all her life, and though Lord Lansdowne and my colleague had contrived between them to make some confusion with the Council papers she was not put out by it." Simultaneously with the salute of the guns in the Park the Queen appeared at the windows of the Presence Chamber before the cheering crowds in the Palace quadrangle. Her Majesty wore a dress of black silk with a crêpe scarf over a white tippet of swans' down, and a tiny black bonnet. She looked very pale, and was evidently much affected by the loyal greeting she received. During the reading of the Proclamation there was some little noise amongst the crowd until the stentorian voice of O'Connell* was heard demanding silence. Then all was quiet until the end of the Proclamation was reached, when O'Connell waved his hat in the air and cheered vociferously, and the crowd took up the adjunction, "God save

* O'Connell afterwards declared that "if it were necessary he could get 500,000 brave Irishmen to defend the life, the honour, and the person of the beloved young lady by whom England's throne is now filled."

the Queen" with a mighty shout; and then, amidst the gun firing, the strains of the National Anthem played by the massed bands, and the plaudits of her assembled subjects, the young monarch, overwrought, was seen to throw her arms about her mother's neck, and then, sobbing, to be led gently away from the window. The incident suggested to Mrs. Browning some beautiful verses, in which she thus apostrophised the girl-sovereign:—

"God save thee, weeping Queen !
Thou shalt be well-beloved !
The tyrant's sceptre cannot move
As those pure tears be moved !
The nature in thine eyes we see,
That tyrant's cannot own ;
The love that guardeth libertics !
Strange blessing on the nation lies,
Whose Sovereign wept—
Yea ! wept to wear its crown !"

In her declaration in Council, dated June 20th, the Queen stated:—"The severe and afflicting loss which the nation has sustained by the death of His Majesty, my beloved uncle, has devolved upon me the duty of administering the good of this Empire. This awful responsibility is imposed upon me so suddenly and at so early a period of my life, that I should feel myself utterly oppressed by the burden, were I not sustained by the hope that Divine Providence, which has called me to this work, will give me strength for the performance of it, and that I shall find in the purity of my intentions and in my zeal for the public welfare, that support and those resources which usually belong to a more mature age and to longer experience. I place my firm reliance upon the wisdom of Parliament, and upon the loyalty and affection of my people. I esteem it also a peculiar advantage that I succeed to a sovereign whose constant regard for the rights and liberties of his subjects, and whose desire to promote the amelioration of the laws and institutions

of the country, rendered his name an object of general attachment and veneration. Educated in England, under the tender and enlightened care of a most affectionate mother, I have learned from my infancy to respect and love the constitutions of my native country. It will be my increasing study to maintain the reformed religion as by law established, securing at the same time to all the full enjoyment of religious liberty, and I shall steadily protect the rights and promote to the utmost of my power the happiness and welfare of all classes of my subjects." This did not please the *Times*, which observed that the words placed in the Queen's mouth by her ministers, was "an implicit pledge to follow the example of her predecessor, by lending her name to that series of revolutionary changes, which these designing ministers have marked under the plausible term of 'ameliorations.' We have seldom heard of any political expedient more unprincipled, more treacherous, and unfeeling, than this. It is an actual trepanning of their innocent Sovereign, subservient to their own selfish interests, and an abuse more glaring than we have ever before witnessed of that confidence which a helpless Princess has been compelled to place on a band of unworthy advisers. . . . And who is the minister? No other than Lord Melbourne, the Whig slave of the Radical, Joseph Hume, and the Anglo-Saxon papist, O'Connell. . . . The rabble-ridden ministers, once possessed of the majority in the House of Commons, will rule their unprotected mistress with a scourge." From these fiery periods may be gathered some idea of the alarm created by Catholic emancipation and concessions to the Dissenters; something, too, perhaps, of the opportunities presented for that intrigue of which Mrs. Emily Crawford has given a vivid if painful sketch.*

* *Contemporary Review*, June, 1897.

"Poor little Queen," wrote Carlyle, "she is at an age at which a girl can hardly be trusted to choose a bonnet for herself, yet a task is laid upon her from which an archangel might shrink." We have seen how the young Queen gained rather than lost in dignity in the midst of her new honours. There is a story which shows that her goodness of heart was no more impoverished than her mind. The story is told in connection with the case of a soldier named Hillman, who had been conspicuously faithful to the Duke of Kent when his regiment threatened to mutiny at Gibraltar. On his return to England the Duke provided Hillman with a cottage near Kensington Palace, and just before he died he requested his wife to look after the soldier and his family. The wish of His Royal Highness was faithfully observed by the Duchess, who, with her daughter, frequently visited Hillman. When the soldier died he left two young children, a girl and a boy. The latter soon followed his father to the grave, but his last days were brightened by visits from the Princess. The girl also became ill. Two days after the Queen's accession, the pastor of the girl called upon her and found her unusually cheerful. When he inquired the cause, the invalid drew from under her pillow a copy of the Psalms. "Look here," she said, "look what the new Queen has sent me to-day by one of her ladies, with the message that 'though she had to leave Kensington she did not forget me.'" The lady also told Miss Hillman that the lines and figures in the margin of the psalter were the dates of the days on which the Queen herself used to read the Psalms so marked, and that the marker had been worked by Her Majesty's own hand. "Was it not beautiful!" exclaimed the girl, bursting into tears.

Outside London, and apart from the places at which she and her mother had stayed, the new Queen was almost unknown. She had been but

"vaguely heard of as a patroness of infant schools and the hospitals and philanthropic societies her father was interested in."

On Saturday, July 15th, the Sovereign went in State to dissolve Parliament. More than three centuries and a half had elapsed since a queen had prorogued Parliament in person. Without and within the House of Lords there were scenes of enthusiasm unprecedented within living memory. In her speech the young Queen said:—"I ascend the throne with a deep sense of the responsibility which is imposed upon me, but I am supported by the consciousness of my own right intentions and by my dependence upon the protection of Almighty God. It will be my care to strengthen our institutions, civil and ecclesiastical, by discreet improvement wherever improvement is required, and to do all in my power to compose and allay animosity and discord. Acting upon these principles I shall upon all occasions look with confidence to the wisdom of Parliament and the affections of my people which form the true support of the dignity of the Crown, and ensures stability of the Constitution." Fanny Kemble, who heard this speech delivered, has said of it: "The enunciation was as perfect as the intention was melodious, and I think it is impossible to hear a more excellent utterance than that of the Queen's English by the English Queen." Mr. Charles Sumner, the American Ambassador, averred that the Queen's "voice is sweet and finely modulated, and she pronounced every word distinctly and with a just regard to its meaning; I think I never heard anything better read in my life than her speech."

From the first the Queen intimated to Lord Melbourne that her signature would be appended to no document she had not read. Mrs. Jameson relates that one of the ministers told her that he once carried the Queen some papers to sign and said something about managing so as to give Her

Majesty "less trouble." The Queen looked up from her papers and said, "Pray never let me hear those words again; never mention the word 'trouble.' Only tell me how the thing is to be done, and done rightly, and I will do it if I can."

Her Majesty, who on July 13th had taken up her abode in Buckingham Palace, on August 22nd went to Windsor, and there welcomed King Leopold and his consort, Queen Louise. Baron Stockmar was there also, and Lord Melbourne and the Duke of Wellington had already begun that devoted tutorship of which so much has been and will in the future be written. Delightful glimpses of these early days at Windsor are given in the brief diary of the late Sir Charles Murray,* then a newly appointed groom-in-waiting.

As a Queen (wrote Sir Charles) she reserves all her confidence for her official advisers, while as a woman she is frank, gay, and unreserved as when she was a young girl. "Heaven grant it may be kept up and rewarded by the affection and the prosperity of her subjects." Baroness Lehzen (who was appointed Private Secretary) was, the diarist observes, treated with the most kind and affectionate confidence. But the Baroness informed him that though she had carefully copied every letter of the *private* correspondence of her young mistress, both before and since her coming to the throne, the Queen had *never* once shown her one letter of Cabinet or State documents, nor had she spoken to her, nor to any woman about her, upon party or political questions.

Sir Charles witnessed numerous instances of tact, judgment, and kindness on the part of the youthful Queen:—"A day or two ago she inspected the Life Guards and Grenadiers on horseback, accompanied by the Duchess of Kent, Lord Hill, Conyngham,

* *Cornhill Magazine*, January, 1897.

and the rest of her suite. She was dressed in a habit of the Windsor uniform, and wore a blue military cap with a gold band passing under the chin. As the several companies and squadrons passed and saluted her, she raised her hand and returned the salute of each ; and the grave earnestness of her manner, as well as the graceful self-possession of her attitude, struck me particularly. It was clear that she felt proud that these fine fellows defiling before her were her defenders, and she looked upon the whole scene with a glow of animation such as it was well calculated to inspire. I was anxious to read their faces, and to see whether I could trace there a responsive glow of loyalty towards their young commandress, but the rigid perfection of their military discipline, extending even to the eyes and features, frustrated my scrutiny, and left imagination to fill up the vacancy."

Some of the most amusing passages in Sir Charles Murray's papers refer to games—whist and draughts particularly—of which Her Majesty seems to have been very fond.

Following a brief visit to Brighton, the Queen in November paid her first State visit to the City—when Sir Moses Montefiore was the first of his faith to be knighted by an English sovereign—and on the 20th of the same month opened her first Parliament. In December the Royal Civil List Bill fixed Her Majesty's income at £385,000. In the January ensuing the first honour bestowed by the Queen, that of a G.C.B., was received from Her Majesty by the Earl of Durham, the new Governor-General of Canada. On May 17th Her Majesty's birthday was celebrated with much magnificence. On June 28th came the great scene of the Coronation in Westminster Abbey. It is estimated that the ceremony attracted 400,000 persons to London. On her way to the Abbey the Queen saw the police using their truncheons to keep back the pressing mob. Stopping

her carriage, she called her Master of the Horse and told him it was *her order* that all violence should be avoided. Dr. Stoughton tells us that "When the procession entered the nave officers of State and foreign ambassadors appeared in rich costume. Diamond decked coats and rich mantles made a grand show, yet they chiefly served to set off the simple dignity of the Queen in her early girlhood, whilst a spell of loyalty touched spectators looking down from lofty galleries. The coronation shout of 'God save the Queen' needed to be heard that it might be fully understood. Afterwards a stream of dignified personages with mantles and coronets issued from the choir and covered the nave with a tesselated pattern and rich colours." One striking detail was the simultaneous self-coronetting of the peers and peeresses as Her Majesty was crowned. Two further incidents must be noted. The ruby ring of sovereignty had been made to fit the little finger, and the pressing of the precious circlet upon the finger—the fourth—prescribed by the rubric caused Her Majesty intense pain. To remove the ring after the ceremony copious bathing with iced water had to be resorted to. An aged peer, Lord Rolle, fell down the steps of the throne in endeavouring to pay suitable homage to his Queen. The first impulse of the Queen was to rise, and when the peer recovered himself and was ascending the steps again, she whispered, "May I not get up and meet him?" and there and then answering herself her own question she rose and advanced down one or two of the steps—an act of gracious kindness which made a great impression. But a foreigner gravely reported (according to Miss Martineau) that the Lords Rolle held their title on condition of performing a tumbling feat at every Coronation. It is significant that the Queen sent a messenger the same evening to inquire if Lord Rolle was any the worse for his mishap. Among the foreign dignitaries present at the

ceremony was Count Brignole, who brought with him a Duchess de Galliera, who afterwards said she "never could have imagined the ecstasy of interest, love, and loyalty that took possession of every soul in the Abbey."

The return from the Abbey was of great magnificence, the Queen wearing for the first time the crown, "in the front of which blazed the historic ruby of Poictiers and Agincourt." Mrs. Jameson wrote :—" When she returned, looking pale and tremulous, crowned, and holding her sceptre in a manner which said 'I have it, and nothing shall wrest it from me,' even Carlyle, who was standing near me, uttered with emotion, 'a blessing on her head.' "

Greville observes :—" The great merit of this Coronation is that so much has been done for the people : to amuse and interest *them* seems to have been the principal object." A fair was held in Hyde Park, which lasted four days. At the Queen's request the theatres and other places of amusement were thrown open. "The conduct of the crowds was excellent." Soult and Wellington drank each other's healths at a great banquet at the Guildhall, and later the Iron Duke gave a ball at Apsley House to which two thousand guests were invited.

The youthful Sovereign, for all her devotion to the affairs of State, and her microscopic rule of the affairs of her household, seems to have led at this time a life of light-hearted gaiety. Never was there such a Court before, or such a Queen ; and the only shadows were cast by the lamentable death of Lady Flora Hastings, and the famous "Bedchamber Plot," when Her Majesty, on Lord Melbourne's dismissal from power, refused to part with her ladies. The latter incident at all events ended happily in the return of Melbourne to his place by the side of the Sovereign, and was regarded by the people (if not by the Peelites) with more amused sympathy than indignation. It was, after all, a matter that had its

origin in a misunderstanding ; and in after years the Queen, with her characteristic generosity, took the whole blame upon herself.

The prayer of the poet Praed uttered at this period must be of the deepest interest to the millions who have lived to see its aspirations realised :—

“ That she may see, our Bright and Fair,
How arduous is her path to fame,
How much of solemn thought and care
An Empire's interests fitly claim ;
That she may know how poor 'twould seem,
In one who graces Britain's Throne,
To patronize a party's scheme
Or make a favourite's cause her own ;
That she may feel to whom belong
Alike the contest and the prize,
Whence springs the valour of the strong,
Whence flows the counsel of the wise ;
That she may keep in womanhood
The heaven-born impulses of youth,
The zeal for universal good,
The reverence for Eternal Truth ;
That she may seek the right and just,
That she may shun the false and mean ;
That she may win all love and trust,
Blessing and blest—God save the Queen ! ”

CHAPTER VII.—(1837-1840.)

Prince Albert's Felicitations—The Queen's Suitors—Betrothed—
The Queen's Declaration—Prince Albert's Religion, Privy
Purse, and Precedence—The Royal Marriage.

WHEN Prince Albert heard of the Accession of his royal cousin he wrote from Bonn (June 26th, 1837) :—

“ MY DEAREST COUSIN,—I must write you a few lines to present you my sincerest felicitations on that great change which has taken place in your life. Now you are the Queen of the mightiest land of Europe, and in your hand lies the happiness of millions. May Heaven assist you and strengthen you with its strength in that high and difficult task. I hope that your reign may be long, happy, and glorious, and that your efforts may be rewarded by the thankfulness and love of your subjects. May I pray you to think likewise sometimes of your cousins in Bonn, and to continue to them that kindness you favoured them with till now. Be assured that our minds are always with you. I will not be indiscreet and abuse your time.

“ Believe me, always,

“ Your Majesty's obedient and faithful servant,
“ ALBERT.”

This is the first letter written by the Prince in English.

In the autumn of the same year, Prince Albert, acting on the advice of King Leopold, went on a tour in Switzerland, South Germany, and Italy. He then thought he was at the parting of the ways. Writing to Baron Stockmar a few months later, King Leopold referred to a long conversation with his nephew on the subject of the postponement of

the marriage "for a few years." "If," wrote the King of the Belgians "I am not mistaken in him, he possesses all the qualities required to fit him for the position which he will occupy in England. His understanding is sound, his apprehension clear and rapid, and his heart is in the right place." On his part the Prince was, it appears, ready to submit to delay provided it was accompanied by some definite assurance by the Queen as to her ultimate intention. The Queen, however, was in what has been called "her wayward and wilful tune"; and in a letter written to her uncle on January 4th, 1838, demurred to the suggestion that some "definite arrangement" should be made for the year 1839, and supported her position by reasons which, as Sir Theodore Martin says, "those who know the world best will agree were dictated by sound practical sense. She was herself, she urged, too young. So also was the Prince; and being still under age, a marriage with him would be regarded by her subjects as premature. Moreover, his mastery of the English language was still very imperfect, and, if he was to take up a proper position in England, it was important that this defect should be remedied; and that he should also have a wider experience." King Leopold deemed the Queen's logic conclusive.

In the meantime the Queen "never had an idea, if she married at all, of anyone else." And this was not because suitors and schemers were lacking at home. The Prince of Holstein, the Duc de Nemours, the Prince de Solms, a son of the veteran Marquis of Anglesea were among the former. It is recorded that whilst the fate of the Prince of Orange was in the balance, Her Majesty was seen to go to a window to look out after him as he mounted his horse and rode away. The ladies in attendance were not a little excited. But after watching the retreating scarlet-clad and green-plumed figure till it had disappeared from view, the Queen set rising

rumour at rest by exclaiming with a laugh, “How like a radish he looks!” As regards the schemers, her uncle of Hanover, who was then riding rough shod over the liberties of his subjects, hoped Her Majesty’s health would break down under the strain of the new excitement to which she was subjected. About this time Melbourne declared, “The Queen must get married. It would be worse than a disaster if she died childless.”

In July, 1839, the Queen wrote to King Leopold still strongly urging the necessity of delay, with the result that Prince Albert encouraged the idea that his cousin “wished the affair to be considered as broken off.” In the following October he accompanied his brother Ernest to England. They arrived at Windsor Castle on October 10th, and the cousins, who each anticipated a dignified farewell meeting, were, on the sight of each other, there and then drawn into the golden web of mutual and life-long affection. Five days later the Queen and the Prince were betrothed. The Queen wrote to her uncle that her mind was quite made up, and that she loved the Prince more than she could say. The Prince expressed to the same confidant his happiness by quoting two lines from Schiller’s “Song of the Bell”:

“Das Auge sieht den Himmel offen,
Es Schwellt das Herz in Seligkeit.”*

The picturesque Tudor fortress has never been the scene of a more exquisite little drama than that enacted there in the autumn of 1839; and King Leopold, on hearing of it, “had . . . almost the feeling of old Simeon: ‘Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.’”

On November 23rd, the *London Gazette* contained in an “extraordinary” issue the following announce-

* “Heaven opens on the ravished eye,
The heart is all entranced with bliss.”—MARTIN.

ment :—"Her Majesty being this day present in the Council, was pleased to make the following declaration, viz.—'I HAVE caused you to be summoned at the present time in order that I may acquaint you with my resolution in a matter which deeply concerns the welfare of My people, and the happiness of My future life. It is My intention to ally Myself in Marriage to the Prince Albert Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. Deeply impressed with the solemnity of the engagement which I am about to contract, I have not come to this decision without mature consideration, nor without feeling a strong assurance that with the blessing of Almighty God, it will at once secure my domestic felicity and serve the interests of My country. I have thought fit to make this resolution known to you at the earliest period, in order that you may be fully apprised of a matter so highly important to Me and to My kingdom, and which I persuade Myself will be most acceptable to all My loving subjects.' Whereupon all the Privy Councillors present made it their humble request to Her Majesty that Her Majesty's most gracious declaration to them might be made public; which Her Majesty was pleased to order accordingly.—*C. C. Greville.*"

At the Council, which was held in Buckingham Palace, eighty members were present. Asked by the Duchess of Gloucester, prior to the trying ordeal, if the making of her declaration were not "a very nervous thing to do," the Queen is said to have replied: "Yes; but I did a much more nervous thing a little while ago: I proposed to Prince Albert." The law enjoined upon the Queen the treble task of personal proposal, personal declaration in Council, and personal announcement to the Lords and Commons. Greville, describing the Council scene, wrote: "The folding doors were thrown open and the Queen came in, attired in a plain morning gown, but wearing a bracelet containing Prince

Albert's picture. She read the declaration in a clear, sonorous, sweet-toned voice, but her hands trembled so excessively that I wonder she was able to read the paper which she held." This is what the Queen herself confided to her journal: " Precisely at two, I went in. The room was full, but I hardly knew who was there. Lord Melbourne I saw looking kindly at me with tears in his eyes, but he was not near me. I then read my short declaration. I felt my hands shake, but I did not make one mistake. I felt most happy and thankful when it was over . . . the whole thing not lasting above two or three minutes."

On December 7th, Prince Albert (who had returned to Coburg) wrote to the Queen:—" . . . So the secret is out, the affair made public, and to all appearance generally received with great satisfaction. This is a good omen for us. . . . That people entertain everywhere so good an opinion of me . . . fills me with uneasiness and apprehension that when I make my appearance they will be bitterly undeceived not to find me what they expected. How often are my thoughts with you. The hours I was privileged to pass with you in your dear little room are the radiant points of my life; and I cannot even yet clearly picture to myself that I am to be indeed so happy as to be always near you, always your protector."

One further important event of 1839 demands mention. On October 7th the creditors of the late Duke of Kent waited upon the Queen to present an address of thanks for her payment of the Duke's debts, which amounted to £50,000.

On January 16th, 1840, the Queen opened Parliament in person, and made in her speech a formal announcement of her approaching marriage. She said:—" Since you were last assembled, I have declared my intention of allying myself in marriage with the Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. I



QUEEN VICTORIA TAKING THE OATH TO MAINTAIN THE
PROTESTANT FAITH.

From the painting by Sir George Hayter. By permission of Messrs. H. Graves & Co.



humbly implore that the Divine blessing may prosper this union, and render it conducive to the interests of my people as well as to my own domestic happiness ; and it will be to me a source of the most lively satisfaction to find the resolution I have taken approved by my Parliament. The constant proofs which I have received of your attachment to my person and family persuade me that you will enable me to provide such an establishment as may appear suitable to the rank of the Prince and the dignity of the Crown.” The omission from this speech of any reference to the fact that the Prince was a Protestant led to much angry discussion amongst the advocates of the “No Popery” policy, and knowledge of the Lutheran traditions of the House of Coburg seems to have been confined to a few. King Leopold in a letter to the Queen on December 6th predicted what would happen. Prince Albert was variously assailed as a Papist, an infidel, and a Radical. But it was amongst the aristocracy, not the mass of the people, that the coming marriage was distasteful. The people were delighted that the Queen was making “a love match,” and when, on February 6th, Prince Albert arrived at Dover, he was surprised as well as deeply moved by the intense cordiality of his welcome. He was accompanied by General Grey and Lord Torrington, who had gone over to Coburg with the patent for investing the Prince with the Order of the Garter. On January 24th, the Prince was “naturalised” as a British subject. On January 27th the Government proposed to the House of Commons a grant to Prince Albert of £50,000 per annum, as in the cases of Queen Caroline, Queen Charlotte, Queen Adelaide, Prince Leopold, and the husband of Queen Anne. By 262 to 158, the vote was reduced to £30,000. On the same date in the House of Lords the ministry were defeated on the proposal to give the Prince precedence

next after the Sovereign.* The Government by a little thoughtfulness might have saved the Queen these checks and discouragements at the hands of the Tory opposition. The debate on the precedence question caused far more serious annoyance to Her Majesty than the monetary matter, and Her Majesty was annoyed also with the manner in which the subject of the Prince's household was handled. Prince Albert simply wrote that "Whilst I possess your love" the debates "cannot make me unhappy."

The marriage took place on Monday, February 10th, at the Chapel Royal, St. James's. Prior to the ceremony, the Archbishop of Canterbury had asked the Queen if she would desire the omission of the word "obey" from the service. "My lord," answered Her Majesty, "omit nothing. I wish to be married as a woman, not as a queen." The Royal bride looked extremely pale as she passed along, crowned with a simple wreath of orange blossoms. Her dress, of white satin, was ornamented with orange blooms and diamonds. Her veil was of Honiton lace. The bridegroom wore the uniform of a British Field Marshal, which reminds one of the fact that the Duke of Wellington was not, as he is popularly supposed to have been, amongst the twenty-one signatories to the marriage register, in addition to those of the high contracting parties. As the Prince and his bride were returning in their carriage to Buckingham Palace, says one chronicler, he held her hand in his, but in such a way as to leave the wedding ring visible to the assembled and cheering crowds. Describing the ceremony the Dowager Lady Lyttelton, then a Lady-in-Waiting, gave in few words eloquent expression to the relief that must have been in the Queen's heart. Great happiness (wrote Lady Lyttelton) was in the Queen's

* Precedence after the Queen was accorded the Prince by Letters patent on March 3rd, 1840.

countenance, "and her look of confidence and comfort at the Prince when they talked away as man and wife was very pleasing to see. . . . Such a new thing for her to *dare* to be *unguarded* in conversing with anybody, and with her frank and fearless nature the restraints she has hitherto been under from one reason or another must have been most painful."

In the afternoon, in that "Queen's weather" which has passed into currency as a national proverb, bride and bridegroom set out for their drive to Windsor. The route was lined with enthusiastic people. The streets of the Royal borough glittered with light. Eton "turned out as one boy with one vast shout of delight and excitement," and the bridal pair, on their way to the Castle through decorated and illuminated streets, evoked a rapturous welcome from assembled thousands. "What above all other incidents of that occasion lives in my memory at the present moment" (wrote the late Dr. Stoughton in 1894) "is the sudden view which I caught a day or two afterwards of the wedded pair in a pony carriage, driven by the bridegroom, as his bride nestled beside him under his wing, a simplicity which gave exquisite finish to the chief pictures which passed before me that summer."

Another incident was recalled by the venerable divine:—"At a town meeting it was proposed that an address of congratulation should be presented to Her Majesty by the mayor and others. The presentation followed at a *levée*. It was interesting to see notabilities assembled in St. James's Palace at the first public reception by Her Majesty after the Royal marriage. Among a crowd of noblemen in the ante-room were pointed out in particular Dr. Phillpotts, Bishop of Exeter, with an eagle eye indicative of his intellect, and Joseph Hume, the sturdy economist; both of them much talked of at that period. Others I have forgotten. After waiting we were ushered into the presence, the Queen with

Prince Albert at her side occupying a place near a window not far from the entrance door. Since that I have knelt before Her Majesty more than once, but how great the difference between the first and last occasions—the girl become a matron, the sparkling bride a sorrowful widow, and the newly married wife a mother with sons and daughters standing round in reverence and affection."

The Penny Post was inaugurated in January, 1840, and the picture of their young Sovereign on the new stamps and new coins began the work of visualising Her Majesty in the eyes of those to whom she always consistently and earnestly referred to as "her beloved people."

CHAPTER VIII.—(1841-1842.)

Princely Principles—Births of the Princess Royal and the Prince of Wales—Attempts on the Queen's Life—The Royal Home Circle as Pictured by Mendelssohn—First Visit to Scotland.

IT may safely be asserted that the full story of the Queen's married life can never be told better than Sir Theodore Martin has related it in his "Life of the Prince Consort." This work is in five large volumes, each of which contains upwards of five hundred pages. The narrative, despite the modern system of universal condensation, could not well be given adequately in less space, and Her Majesty's published journals* are also indispensable. Here we can only glance at some of the more important happenings. The twenty-three years were full of world-crises and events of the most vital importance to Great Britain and to Europe. In proportion the domestic life at Buckingham Palace and Windsor, and later at Osborne and Balmoral, was crowded with picturesque incidents, for all its studied simplicity. The Queen's affection for her husband was unfettered except by care for his welfare. Of her husband's love for *his wife*—the Queen always liked to hear those two words spoken—one can find, perhaps, no better index than the story told of the Princess Royal in 1856. The Princess, when sealing a letter, set fire to the muslin sleeve of her dress. Her right arm was badly burned. The wound looked ugly. The Princess, however, uttered no cry, though the pain

* "Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands, 1848-1861." Edited by A. Helps.

"More Leaves from the Journal of a Life in the Highlands, 1862-1882."

was terrible. She said, "Don't frighten mamma ; send for papa first." It was the Princess Royal who afterwards said of her father : " In no relation of life did the goodness and greatness of his character appear more than in the management of his children. The most judicious, impartial, and loving of fathers, he was at once the friend and master, ever by his example enforcing the precepts he sought to instil." The Queen described him as the " life of her life " ; the bulk of the people knew his worth only when his life was beyond recall. The Prince has left on record the thoughts which were the guides of his conduct. In a letter to the Duke of Wellington in 1850 declining the post of Commander-in-Chief, His Royal Highness wrote :—" My position of Consort of the Sovereign . . . is a most peculiar and delicate one. Whilst a female sovereign has a great many disadvantages in comparison with a King, yet, if she is married, and her husband understands and does his duty, her position, on the other hand, has many compensating advantages, and, in the long run, will be found even to be stronger than that of a male sovereign. But this requires that the husband should entirely sink his *own individual* existence in that of his wife—that he should aim at no power by himself, or for himself—should shun all ostentation—assume no separate responsibility before the public, but make his position entirely a part of hers—fill up every gap which, as a woman, she would naturally leave in the exercise of her regal functions—continually and anxiously watch every part of the public business, in order to be able to advise and assist her at any moment in any of the multifarious and difficult questions or duties brought before her, sometimes international, sometimes political, or social, or personal. As the natural head of her family, superintendent of her household, manager of her private affairs, sole *confidential* adviser in politics, and only assistant in her communications with the officers

of the Government, he is besides the husband of the Queen, the tutor of the Royal children, the private secretary of the Sovereign, and her permanent minister." It was an exacting standard. The Prince kept it ever before him. Wherever he went without the Queen he made it a rule, to which there was no exception, that his equerry always accompanied him. His nature was deeply religious. Indeed, some might regard him as almost a mystic were it not for the sterling common-sense which governed his every speech and action. He was a student all his life. He sought no respect that was not based on worth apart from title, and nothing gave greater joy to him or to the Queen than the intellectual gifts of their children.

The first appearance in State of the Queen and Prince Albert after their marriage was at Drury Lane Theatre on February 26th, when their reception was enthusiastic to a degree. On June 10th occurred the first attempt on the Queen's life. It was made by a pot-boy named Edward Oxford, who fired twice at the Royal carriage as it was proceeding up Constitution Hill. The pistols missed fire, and the man being arrested, the Queen displayed her presence of mind by driving immediately to her mother's residence in Belgrave Square, so that the Duchess might learn at once of her daughter's safety. Her Majesty then continued her drive in the Park and was the object of the most outspoken demonstrations of devoted loyalty. Oxford was sent as a lunatic to Bedlam. He was later sent to Dartmoor, whence in 1875 he was released on the condition that he left the country. The attempt served to draw attention to the possibilities of the King of Hanover's succession to the English throne, so that when it was known that the Queen was about to give birth to a child a Bill appointing Prince Albert as Regent in the event of the Queen's death leaving an infant heir was passed without difficulty on August 7th. On

November 21st the Princess Royal (the Empress Frederic of Germany) was born at Buckingham Palace. The Queen, who then, as always afterwards, "made an excellent recovery," has written of her husband: "No one but himself ever lifted her from her bed to the sofa, and he always helped to wheel her on her bed or sofa to the next room. However occupied he was, he ever came with a sweet smile on his face. In short his care of her was like that of a mother, nor could there be a kinder, wiser, or more judicious nurse."

It is, perhaps, seldom remembered that the German Christmas tree custom was this year introduced by Prince Albert. On February 10th, 1841, the little princess was christened Victoria Adelaide Mary Louisa. In August Sir Robert Peel came into power—a memorable change which at least found and left the Queen stronger than she had been, and it left, too, Sir Robert more devoted to Her Majesty than in 1839. On November 9th the birth of the Prince of Wales gave unbounded delight to his parents and to the nation, and was the occasion of so much firing of artillery as to draw from Douglas Jerrold the witty remark, "How they do *powder* these royal babies!"

The Duke of Wellington is said to have asked the nurse, "Is it a boy?" "It's a *prince*, your Grace," answered the woman in an offended tone. *Punch* celebrated the event in some verses, two of which ran:

Huzza ! we've a little Prince at last,
A roaring Royal boy ;
And all day long the beaming bells
Have rung the peals of joy.

And the little park guns have blazed away,
And made a tremendous noise ;
Whilst the air has been filled since eleven o'clock
With the shouts of little boys.

The Queen's nursery now and henceforward was

governed by the same simplicity that was observed in the case of her own childhood; and innumerable instances are recorded of the lessons of courtesy and self-control enjoined by the Royal parents on their children.

The following year was marked by a growth of national trouble. Europe was in a condition of threatening unrest. Bad news came to hand from China, the West Indies, South Africa, and Afghanistan. At home the industrial position was critical in the extreme. Court dinners, concerts and balls were held with the view to revive trade; and where the Court led the aristocracy followed. On May 7th there was a grand costume ball at Buckingham Palace, at which the Queen represented Queen Philippa and wore a costume made in Spitalfields, on behalf of the weavers, in which district there was later in the month a ball at Covent Garden, which the Queen and Prince Albert attended. When in June Sir Robert Peel introduced his Income Tax Bill for the relief of the prevalent distress the Queen at once insisted that her own income, although legally exempt from, should be subject to the tax.

We are now coming to one of the most striking examples of the Queen's courage that have been recorded. When on February 3rd, 1842, Baroness Bunsen witnessed the opening of Parliament by Her Majesty she wrote:—"It cannot be said that she *did well*, but that she *was the Queen*—she was and felt herself to be the descendant of her ancestors." What a splendid commentary on these words the month of May was to provide! and the prayer of the Baroness, "God bless and guide her, for her sake and for the sake of all," found then an echo in every heart.

On Sunday, May 29th, as the Queen and Prince Albert were returning to Buckingham Palace from the Chapel Royal, St. James's, a man attempted to shoot them. He was only seen by two people in

addition to the Prince. The weapon missed fire and the man disappeared in the crowd. The Prince was much concerned ; but, whilst he communicated with the police, every precaution was taken to keep the matter a secret. Both the Queen and her husband felt that the attempt would be renewed. But Her Majesty decided not to discontinue her afternoon drives. All the difference lay in the knowledge of the danger on the part of one of the equerries, Colonel Arbuthnot, and the fact that the Queen and the Prince went alone in the Royal carriage. Her Majesty, though fully alive to the danger she was incurring, was, notwithstanding, most calm, cheerful and composed. She drove through Hyde Park, Regent's Park, and to Hampstead.

The return journey was made at a more rapid pace. On Constitution Hill a man was seen to snatch a pistol out of his breast, and, levelling it quickly, to aim at the Queen ; but he aimed too low. Her Majesty heard the report, but did not betray the slightest appearance of alarm. The Prince had the appearance of one deeply affected at Her Majesty's providential escape. On seeing the man, after he had fired, His Royal Highness exclaimed, "It is the same man." The ruffian—John Francis by name, "a little swarthy, ill-looking rascal," twenty-two years old, and a joiner by trade—was standing near a policeman, who immediately seized him, but could not prevent the shot. The scene of the outrage was the same spot where Oxford had fired at the Queen two years previously.

Mr. Anson, the Prince's Secretary, wrote :—" Her Majesty seemed none the worse. She told me she had fully expected it, and it was a relief to her to get it over. She had for some time been under the impression that one of these mad attempts would be made. . . . She had been much gratified by the kind feeling people had shown."

The same evening the Queen with Prince Albert

went to the Italian opera, where the audience sang the National Anthem, and burst into cheers at almost every line. On the day following addresses of congratulation were voted by both Houses of Parliament followed by others from all parts of the Kingdom. An immense concourse of people assembled without the Palace gates, and when the Queen came out for her accustomed drive she was loudly and continuously cheered. The drive is described as a triumphal progress. The Queen wrote to King Leopold:—"I was really not at all frightened, and feel very proud at dear Uncle Mensdorff calling me *sehr müthig*,* which I shall ever remember with delight, coming from so distinguished an officer as he is. Great affection is shown us."

On June 17th Francis was sentenced to death, but the sentence was, by the Queen's desire, commuted to one of transportation for life. On July 3rd, the day following the announcement of the Royal clemency, a hunch-backed youth, named John William Bean, levelled a pistol (loaded with powder, paper, and pieces of clay pipe) at the Queen as she was driving to the Chapel Royal, St. James's, accompanied by Prince Albert and King Leopold. The weapon, happily, missed fire; happily too, it was not until later that the Queen was apprised of the attempt. She then betrayed no alarm, but drew attention to the incentive to such acts provided by the law, which ruled that they could only be dealt with as acts of high treason. As a result of Her Majesty's representations, the ministry on July 12th brought in a Bill making such attempts misdemeanours, to be punished by transportation for seven years, or imprisonment with or without hard labour for a term not exceeding three years; the culprit "to be publicly or privately whipped as often and in such manner and form as the court

* Very courageous.

shall direct, not exceeding three." The bill became law on July 16th, and under it Bean was on August 25th sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment.

A charming scene in the home life of the young Queen is described in a letter, written by Mendelsohn to his mother, telling of a visit to Buckingham Palace on July 9th, 1842. The composer was then staying for a few weeks at Denmark Hill. The letter was, I believe, first translated into English in 1897. I quote the translation by Professor M. J. Griffin, of Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota, who sent it to the New York *Independent* of July 22nd, 1897:—

"Prince Albert had invited me to visit him on Saturday, at half-past one o'clock, in order that I might try his organ before leaving England. I found him alone, and as we were conversing the Queen came in, also alone, in a morning dress. She said that she must start in an hour for Claremont. 'But, gracious, how it looks here!' she added, as she saw that the wind had scattered the leaves of a large, unbound volume of sheet music upon the pedals and in the corners. Saying this she knelt down and began to gather up the sheets. Prince Albert helped her, and I was not idle. After that the Prince began to explain to me the stops, and during this the Queen said that she would put things to rights again alone. Thereupon I begged the Prince to play something for me first; it would give me something to boast of in Germany; and then he played a choral from memory, so prettily and purely, and so free from mistakes, that many an organist might be proud to do as well. The Queen, who had finished her work, now seated herself near us and listened with great delight. After that it was my turn, and I began the chorus from my oratorio of 'Paul'—'Wie lieblich sind die Boten.'

"Before I had finished playing the first stanza they both began to sing the chorus, and the Prince pulled the stops for me through the entire piece so skilfully, and all from memory, that I was quite delighted and enjoyed it greatly. Then the Prince of Gotha came in and we engaged in conversation. Among other things, the Queen inquired if I had composed any new songs, and said that she was fond of singing those that had been published. 'You ought to sing one for him,' said Prince Albert. She waited to be urged a little, and then said she would try 'Das Frühlingslied,' if she only had the music; but all her music was already

packed to be sent to Claremont. 'Oh!' said I, 'it might perhaps be unpacked.' 'We must send for Lady N. N.,' said the Queen. She rang the bell, the servants ran, but returned unsuccessful ; and then the Queen herself went, and while she was gone Prince Albert said to me : 'The Queen begs you to take this gift as a souvenir,' and gave me a small box with a beautiful ring, upon which was engraved 'V. R., 1842.' Then the Queen came back and said : 'Lady N. N. has gone, and has taken all my things with her. I think it is very improper.' You cannot imagine how that amused me. Then I said she surely would not make me suffer for the mishap, and that I would take something else ; so, after some consultation with her husband, he said : 'She will sing you something from Glück.' The Princess of Gotha had joined us in the meantime, and so we five went through the corridors and rooms to the Queen's sitting-room, where, by the piano, stood an exceedingly stout hobby-horse and two large bird-cages, and pictures on the walls, and beautifully bound books on the tables, and sheet music on the piano. The Duchess of Kent also came in, and while they were talking, I was rummaging a little among the music, and found the very first volume of my songs. Then I naturally asked her to sing one of them instead of one of Glück's, and what do you suppose she chose ? 'Schöner und Schöner,' and she sang it most charmingly. Then I had to confess that Fanny had composed the song (it was really very hard on me), and begged her to sing one of those that were really n'in'e. She said she would gladly do it if I would help her, and sang, 'Lass dich nur nichts nicht dauern,' without a mistake, and with an expression that was wonderfully beautiful and full of feeling. I thought under the circumstances, I must not compliment her too much, and merely thanked her a great many times ; but when she said : 'Oh, if I had not been so anxious ! I have usually a very long breath.' I praised her heartily and with the best conscience imaginable. After that Prince Albert sang : 'Es ist ein Schnitter, der heisst Tod' ('There is a Reaper whose name is Death'), and then he said that I must play something before my departure, and gave as themes the choral which he had just played on the organ and the 'Schnitter.' If I had had my usual experience I would have been obliged to improvise most wretchedly, for thus it almost always is with me when I want to do very well ; and then I would have carried away with me from the entire afternoon nothing but vexation. But just as if I were to retain a very beautiful and joyous memory of it, I succeeded in my improvising as I seldom do. Besides the two themes I took, of course, the songs which the Queen had sung ; but it all came in so naturally that I would gladly not have stopped at all ; and they followed me with an appreciation and attention such as I have never found when I have improvised in the presence of listeners. Now and then they would say, 'I

hope you will visit us in England again soon.' Then I went away and saw below the beautiful carriages with the postillions in red liveries waiting, and after a quarter of an hour the flag at the palace was lowered and the papers announced: 'Her Majesty left the palace at half-past three.'

"I have still to add that I asked permission to dedicate my Symphony in A Minor to the Queen, and that the Queen, just as she was about to begin to sing, said: 'But the parrot must be put out first, or he will scream louder than I can sing.' Whereupon Prince Albert rang the bell, but the Prince of Gotha said: 'I will carry it out,' and I said: 'Let me do it; ' and I carried the huge cage out to the astonished servants."

Was it by design or accident that in the pages of the New York *Independent* the foregoing letter was followed by an article entitled "Plain Life and High Thought"?

In proroguing Parliament on August 12th, the Queen said:—"There are, I trust, indications of gradual recovery from that depression which has affected many branches of manufacturing industry, and has exposed large classes of my people to privation and sufferings which have caused me the deepest concern. You will, I am confident, be actuated on your return to your several counties by the same enlightened zeal for the public interests which you have manifested during the discharge of your Parliamentary duties; and will do your utmost to encourage by your example and active exertions that spirit of order and submission to the law which is essential to the public happiness, and without which there can be no enjoyment of the fruits of peaceful industry and no advance in the career of social improvement."

On August 29th, Her Majesty and Prince Albert left London on their first visit to Scotland. The journey was made via Woolwich and Leith, the distance between these places being covered on board the yacht "Royal George." The Queen held a Drawing Room in Dalkeith Palace, and visited many places of historic interest. Her Majesty afterwards described the journey as one of the most

delightful in her life. On quitting Scottish soil on September 15th, the Queen wrote to Lord Aberdeen, "The Queen cannot leave Scotland without a feeling of regret that her visit on the present occasion could not be further prolonged. Her Majesty fully expected to witness the loyalty and attachment of her Scottish subjects, but the devotion and enthusiasm evinced in every quarter and by all ranks have produced an impression on the mind of Her Majesty which can never be effaced." "Seldom," remarks the editor of the "Greville Memoirs," "has an official assurance and prediction been more amply gratified than this." The Highlanders, it is worthy of note, credited the Queen with "a lucky foot."

On his return to Windsor on September 18th, Prince Albert wrote to the Duchess of Saxe-Gotha: "Scotland has made a most favourable impression upon us both. The country is full of beauty of a severe and grand character; perfect for sport of all kinds, and the air remarkably pure and light in comparison with what we have here. The people are more natural, and marked by that honesty and sympathy which always distinguish the inhabitants of mountainous countries who live far away from towns. There is, moreover, no country where historical traditions are preserved with such fidelity or to the same extent. Every spot is connected with some interesting historical fact, and with most of these Sir Walter Scott's accurate descriptions have made us familiar."

In one of her later visits to the Highlands the Queen was reminded that the great-great-grandfathers of the men who were showing her every possible mark of loyalty and affection had lost their heads for trying to dethrone the Queen's great-great-grandfather. "Yes," says the Queen in her journal, "and *I* feel a sort of reverence in going over these scenes in this most beautiful country which I am proud to call my own, where there was such

devoted loyalty to the family of my ancestors—for Stuart blood is in my veins,* and I am *now* their representative, and the people are as devoted and loyal to me as they were to that unhappy race."

The bracing effect of the visit to Scotland in the late summer of 1842 was enhanced as winter drew on by the good news that came to hand from China and Afghanistan.

* George I. was son of Sophia, daughter of Elizabeth, daughter of James I., and the heroine of much noble verse and queenly action

CHAPTER IX.—(1843-1860.)

Imperial Visitors—'48—In Ireland—The Great Exhibition—Tribute to the Duke of Wellington—Crimean War—The Queen's Solicitude for the Army and Navy—India attached to the Crown.

THE opening of the year 1843 belied the hopes amidst which its predecessor closed. On January 20th Sir Robert Peel's private secretary was assassinated. The tragedy so affected the Queen that when Parliament assembled on February 2nd, she for the first time after her accession was unable to be present through indisposition. On April 21st the Duke of Sussex died. Four days later the Princess Alice was born. On June 29th Her Majesty and Prince Albert visited an exhibition of prize cartoons for the decoration of the new Houses of Parliament, and inspected the now forgotten Thames tunnel. On August 24th Her Majesty prorogued Parliament. Four days afterwards with Prince Albert, the Queen left England on a yachting cruise, and visited Louis Philippe at the Château d'Eu, near Tréport. The French King and his family gave their visitors a truly Royal welcome. The visit to Tréport was followed by a trip to Belgium.

Whilst thinking on the possibilities of better relations with France, the Queen on June 1st received the Tsar Nicholas, of whom she wrote:—“There is much about him which I cannot help liking, and I think his character is one that should be understood and looked upon for once as it is. He is stern and severe, with strict principles of *duty*, which nothing on earth will make him change. Politics and military concerns are the only things he

takes great interest in . . . but he is sincere, I am certain—sincere even in his most despotic acts—for a sense that it is the only way to govern. He was not only civil, but extremely kind to us both, and spoke in the highest praise of dearest Albert to Sir Robert Peel . . . He is not happy, and that melancholy which is visible in the countenance made us sad at times."

There was a crisis at this period in connection with French action in Tahiti, and in the midst of the bother Prince Alfred was born (August 6th, 1844). In September the Court went to Scotland. In October Louis Philippe was the guest of the Queen, and spoke to the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London (who presented him with an address at Windsor) of the advantages of an Anglo-French amity. On October 28th the Queen opened the Royal Exchange. The purchase of the Osborne estate in March, 1845, was a source of the greatest pleasure to the Queen and Prince Albert. "It sounds so pleasant," wrote the Queen, "to have a place of one's own, quiet and retired, and free from all woods and forests and other charming departments, which really are the plague of one's life." During a never-forgotten visit to Germany in August, the Queen stayed at the birthplace of her husband, and inspected many of the spots associated with his younger years. She returned to England by way of Antwerp and the Château d'Eu, and to the troubles of a winter in which the agitation for the repeal of the corn laws reached a critical stage, and famine ravished the sister Isle. On May 25th, 1846, Princess Helena was born. On January 2nd, 1847, Her Majesty headed the Irish famine fund subscription list with a donation of £2000. On July 6th she was present at the installation of Prince Albert as Chancellor of Cambridge University. During the August holiday in Scotland the Queen saw for the first time and was much attracted by the Marquis of

From a Drawing by Percy Wardham.



Lorne—then a “dear, white, fat, fair little fellow,” two years old.

The year that followed—’48—is full of terrible memories. During its early anxieties—on March 18th—Princess Louise (afterwards the wife of the “little fellow” just alluded to) was born. Louis Philippe (as some say in poetic justice for his treachery over the Spanish marriages) became an exile, and was forced to seek hospitality in the land of the Queen whom he had deceived. Happily the Chartist movement of April 10th ended in London without the serious results that had been prophesied, and when on September 5th the Queen prorogued Parliament she was able to declare:—“I have had the satisfaction of being able to preserve peace for my own dominions, and to maintain our domestic tranquillity. The strength of our institutions has been tried, and has not been found wanting. I have studied to preserve the people committed to my charge in the enjoyment of that temperate freedom which they so justly value. My people on their side feel too sensibly the advantages of order and security to allow the promoters of pillage and confusion any chance of success in their wicked designs.” Immediately after the trouble of April 10th, Prince Albert consulted Lord Ashley (Lord Shaftesbury), and acting on his Lordship’s advice, took steps which had a vital influence on the rise of that social reform which has been so marked a characteristic of the Victorian era.

Balmoral was first visited in 1848.

On May 19th, 1849, a man named Hamilton fired a pistol at the Queen. He was sentenced to seven years’ transportation. On the first of the following August, in pursuance of a long cherished wish on the part of both the Queen and Prince Albert, they paid their first visit to Ireland. In Dublin Her Majesty held a *levée*, at which there were 2000 presentations, and a Drawing Room, at which 1600

ladies were presented. So loyal was her reception in Dublin and Belfast that the Queen determined to revisit Ireland at the first opportunity ; but, whilst Her Majesty purposed, the Home Office authorities disposed by declaring that they could not be answerable for Her Majesty's safety. "The Royal children," says the *Times*, "were objects of universal attention and admiration. 'Oh, Queen, dear !' screamed a stout old lady, 'make one of them Prince Patrick, and all Ireland will die for you.'" Prince Arthur was born on May 1st, 1850. His first name was given in honour of the Duke of Wellington, "Patrick" was added by the Queen, "in remembrance of our recent visit to Ireland."

On May 27th, as the Queen was leaving Cambridge House, a well-dressed man darted forward and struck with a stick at the Queen's face. Her Majesty's bonnet was crushed in, and her forehead was severely bruised. The injury, however, was not so serious as to prevent a visit to the opera in the evening, where, on the appearance of Her Majesty, the performance was stopped and the National Anthem sung amidst enthusiastic cheering. The Queen's assailant was Robert Pate, an ex-lieutenant of the 10th Hussars. He was, on July 11th, sentenced to seven years' transportation. On June 17th Her Majesty wrote a strong memorandum on the subject of Lord Palmerston's dispatches. She insisted that she should know distinctly the proposals to which she was asked to give her sanction, and further, that having once given her sanction to a dispatch, it was not to be arbitrarily modified or altered by the minister. In November intense excitement was aroused by the founding of a Roman Catholic hierarchy in England.

The great exhibition of 1851 (May 1st to October 11th) in Hyde Park passed off with the utmost enthusiasm. The crowds were orderly ; there were no accidents. It was a source of the utmost

happiness to the Queen, whose joy at this crowning of her husband's long and untiring efforts finds noble expression in the pages of her journal. Dr. (afterwards Dean) Stanley wrote of the opening ceremony:—"I never had so good a view of the Queen before, and never saw her look so thoroughly regal. She stood in front of the chair, turning round, first to one side and then to the other, with a look of power and pride, flushed with a kind of excitement which I never witnessed in any other human countenance." Princess Mary Adelaide, who went to the state opening of the exhibition, chaperoned by the Duchess of Kent, was roused to enthusiasm by the spectacle and the "truly loyal reception given by John Bull to the Queen." "*We English Royal Family,*" wrote the Princess, "had a right to be proud of our country, and happy that foreigners should witness its loyalty. I would not have exchanged my title of Princess of England at that moment for that of Empress of the whole world." An old Cornish woman, Mary Kerlynach, not wishing to trust herself on a railway, walked to London to see the show and to see the Queen. The Royal journey to Balmoral, in August, was made for the first time by train, on the Great Northern Railway.

On August 30th, 1852, the Queen received a legacy of £250,000, under the will of an eccentric barrister named John Camden Nield. It was accepted by the Queen only when she had ascertained that Nield had left no relatives.

The Queen's journals about this time show the saddening influence of death. The Dukes of Sussex and Cambridge, Queen Adelaide, Prince Albert's father, and Louis Philippe had passed away. On September 14th, 1852, Her Majesty was deeply moved by the death of the Duke of Wellington. Writing to her uncle the Queen said:—"You will mourn with us over the loss we and the whole

nation have experienced in the death of the dear and great Duke of Wellington. He was the pride and the good genius, as it were, of this country, the most loyal and devoted subject, and the staunchest supporter the Crown ever had . . . We shall soon stand sadly alone. Aberdeen is almost the only personal friend of that kind left to us. Melbourne, Peel, Liverpool, now the Duke—all gone!" Immediately on her return from Balmoral the Queen issued a general order to the Army, the closing paragraph of which was as follows:—"The discipline which he exacted from others as the main foundation of the military character, he sternly imposed upon himself; and the Queen desires to impress upon the Army that the greatest commander whom England ever saw has left an example for the imitation of every soldier, in taking as his guiding principle in every relation of life an energetic and unhesitating obedience to the call of duty."

It has been said that the Queen had never seen the Pope. The fact is that during Her Majesty's visit to Brussels he sat quite near to the Queen at a dinner given by King Leopold. He was then Monsignor Pecci.

Following upon the *coup d'état* in Paris on December 1st and 2nd, 1851, we find the Queen and Prince Albert devoting themselves to the betterment of the Services. In 1853 the complications abroad were further complicated for the rulers of this country by industrial distress and the return of the cholera. Prince Leopold was added to the Royal family on April 7th of this year. In August the Queen and Prince Albert visited Dublin for the exhibition, and had another "hundred thousand welcomes." On September 28th Her Majesty laid the foundation-stone of Balmoral Castle. The year 1854 was that of the outbreak of the Crimean War. Her Majesty in her declaration on March 28th, stated that she was actuated "by a desire to divert from her

dominions most disastrous consequences and to save Europe from the predominance of a Power which had violated the faith of treaties and defied the opinion of the civilised world, to take up arms in conjunction with the Emperor of the French for the defence of the Sultan. Her Majesty is persuaded that in so acting she will have the support of her people and that the pretext of zeal for the Christian religion will be used in vain to cover an aggression undertaken in disregard of its holy precepts and of its pure and beneficent spirit."

The Queen, from the windows of Buckingham Palace, witnessed the departure of the Guards. It was, she declared, "a touching and beautiful sight." She also reviewed the Baltic Fleet. "I am," Her Majesty wrote, "very enthusiastic about my dear army and navy, and wish I had two sons in both now. I know I shall suffer much when I hear of losses among them."

It was the ambition of Napoleon III. to assume the command of the French army in the Crimea. He was, it seems, dissuaded from carrying out his project by the father of the present Lord Chamberlain. George William Frederick Villiers, fourth Earl of Clarendon, was one of the most tactful of men, but he was practically at his wits' end to accomplish his difficult task, when he suddenly bethought himself to advise Her Majesty to issue an invitation to the new Imperial couple to come to England. The visit was paid in April, 1855, and returned in August. At the Universal Exhibition in the new Palais de l'Industrie, Prince Albert admired Meissonier's "Le Rixe" ("The Brawl") and Napoleon bought it for £1000 and presented it to the Queen's husband as a birthday gift. A strangely ominous present!

It was with an anxious heart that Her Majesty awaited the slow issue of news from the Crimea. With her elder daughter she stimulated activity in the provision of comforts for the troops. When the

wounded began to return she visited the military hospitals, and her dissatisfaction with their condition led to the establishment at Netley. She also founded the Patriotic Fund. When on May 18th, 1855, Prince Albert distributed war medals for distinguished service in the field—the first ceremony of its kind in this country, the Queen wrote to King Leopold :—“ From the highest Prince of the blood to the lowest private, all received the same distinction for the bravest conduct in the severest actions, and the rough hands of the brave and honest private soldiers came for the first time in contact with that of their Sovereign and their Queen. Noble fellows ! I own I feel as if they were my own children—my heart beats for them as for my nearest and dearest. They were so touched, so pleased—many, I hear, cried ; and they won’t hear of giving up their medals to have their names engraved upon them, for fear that they should not receive the identical one put into their hands by me. Several came by in a sadly mutilated state. None created more interest or is more gallant than young Sir Thomas Trowbridge, who had at Inkerman one leg and the foot of another carried away by a round shot, and continued commanding his battery till the battle was over. . . . He was dragged by in a bath chair, and when I gave him his medal I told him I should make him one of my aides-de-camp for his very gallant conduct, to which he replied : ‘ I am amply repaid for everything.’ One must love and revere such soldiers as these.”

On Dr. (Sir) W. H. Russell’s letters appearing in the *Times*, calling attention to the commissariat scandals—these but a repetition after all of those that characterised our war with the American colonies—the Queen was at once as deeply concerned and as keenly interested as any of her subjects in seeing that a remedy was applied to the evils complained of. Her Majesty wrote to Lord

Raglan :—"The sad privations of the army, the bad weather, and the constant sickness are causes of the deepest concern and anxiety to the Queen and Prince. . . The Queen trusts that Lord Raglan will be *very* strict in seeing that no *unnecessary* privations are incurred by any negligence of those whose duty it is to watch over their wants. . . Lord Raglan cannot think how much we suffer for the Army, and how painfully anxious we are to know that their privations are decreasing." On the return of the "lady of the lamp," Miss Florence Nightingale, from the Crimea, the Queen summoned her to Balmoral to meet the then Secretary for War. In the same year, 1856, the Queen instituted the Victoria Cross and laid the foundation stones of Netley Hospital and Wellington College.

On the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny she wrote to the Secretary for War a letter in which she pointedly referred to the false economy of the War Office. In a memorandum to the Government Her Majesty wrote :—"The present position of the Queen's Army is a pitiable one. The Queen has just seen in the camp at Aldershot regiments which, after eighteen years' foreign service in most trying climates, have come back to England to be sent out after seven months to the Crimea. Having passed through this destructive campaign, they have not been home for a year before they are to go to India for, perhaps, twenty years. This is most cruel and unfair to the gallant men who devote their services to the country, and the Government is in duty to humanity bound to alleviate their position."

On April 14th, 1857, Princess Beatrice was born, and on June 25th, Prince Albert was, by letters patent, given the title of Prince Consort, which the Queen had wished years previously to have conferred upon him. The parting with the Princess Royal, when, on January 25th, 1858, she was married to Prince Frederic of Prussia, was a severe trial to the

Princess herself and to her parents. In this year the Government of India was taken over by the Crown ; and to Her Majesty is to be attributed the words in the Proclamation which have had so stimulating an effect on the Indian peoples. A visit to Cherbourg in 1858 caused the Queen and Prince Albert to at once pay the closest attention to the subject of our coast defences, the condition of which compared sadly with those of France. The next two years saw the rise of the Volunteer force, with which from the first the Queen assiduously identified herself. Napoleon III. was beginning to show himself in his true colours.

On June 4th, 1860, the Queen received from President Buchanan an invitation for the Prince of Wales to visit the United States, and in accepting the invitation she signed the letter, "Your very good friend, VICTORIA R."

Perhaps never before had the August holiday in Scotland been looked forward to with so much desire as in 1860. We read that the Queen and the Prince went on tour in the Highlands attended only by Lady Churchill and General Grey, and travelled incognito as "Lord and Lady Churchill and party."

CHAPTER X.—(1861-1872.)

“Sixty-one”—Prince Albert’s Death—“The Queen’s Seclusion”—First Meeting with Tennison—A Striking Statement—John Bright’s Protest—Carlyle and the Queen—The Prince of Wales’s Illness.

WRITING to her uncle Leopold on February 10th, 1861—the twenty-first anniversary of her wedding—the Queen referred to her nuptial day as one “which has brought to us, and, I may say, to the world at large, such incalculable blessings. Very few can say with me that their husband at the end of twenty-one years is not only full of friendship, kindness, and affection, which a truly happy marriage brings with it, but of the same tender love as in the very first days of our marriage. We missed dear mamma and three of our children, but had six dear ones round us.” At Frogmore, on March 16th, the Duchess of Kent died. “My childhood,” wrote the grief-stricken Queen, “everything seemed to crowd upon me at once. I seemed . . . to have become old. What I had dreaded and fought off the idea for years had come and must be borne.”

In August, the Queen and Prince Albert paid their third visit to Ireland. They visited the Curragh and the beautiful Killarney country, thence going to Balmoral, where they had another delightful tour amidst the loved Highland scenery. The Queen noted in her journal that the tour “was the pleasantest and most enjoyable I ever made,” and added that the expedition was “alas! I fear, our *last* great one!” But a little while and those lines were to be underscored with the sad words: “IT WAS OUR LAST ONE!” In the dull November days, news

reached Windsor of the "Trent" outrage. The steamer "Trent" was boarded on the high seas by American officers, and the envoys accredited to England by the confederated States were removed by force. Lord Palmerston mirrored hasty British indignation in a heated dispatch he sent to the Queen. War seemed imminent. The Prince Consort's last work—he was taken ill on December 2nd—was to recast Lord Palmerston's draft, leaving to the Government of the United States an honourable path of retreat from the false step which had been taken. The path was adopted. The matter ended amicably, and Lord Palmerston afterwards acknowledged that the Prince's "alterations were only one of innumerable instances of the tact and judgment and the power of nice discrimination which excited Lord Palmerston's constant and unbounded admiration."

On November 24th the Prince had noted that for a fortnight his nights had been almost sleepless. On the following day he visited the Prince of Wales at Cambridge. On the 2nd he, in bad weather, visited Sandhurst. On the 28th he was present at a review of the Eton College Volunteers. His presence was due only to a strong sense of duty. "Unhappily," he wrote, "I must be present." He rose at his usual hour for the last time on December 1st. At first the Queen sought relief in the news that her husband's illness "was not fever." Then on the 7th came the awful undeniable truth that it *was* fever, and that typhoid. Whilst in the chapel on the 8th, "a prevision of what was to happen" came upon the harassed Queen, and in that agony of haunting fear she heard scarcely a word of the hopeful sermon preached by Kingsley. The Princess Alice watched by her father's bedside with untiring devotion, and played to him the old religious music of his youth, and sought to cheer her mother's sinking heart. On the 11th, the Queen records in

her journal that she supported him whilst he took some beef-tea ; " and he laid his dear head (his beautiful face, more beautiful than ever, is grown so thin) on my shoulder, and remained a little while, saying, ' It is very comfortable so, dear child ! ' which made me very happy." On the 12th the lungs became affected. On the afternoon of the 14th—a Saturday—the Prince spoke to the Queen for the last time. " Good little wife," he said, as with a sigh he kissed her ; and she, bending over him who was all the world to her, whispered through her tears, " It is your own little wife." A faint movement of the head showed that her words were heard. Then while by the bedside knelt the Queen, the Prince of Wales, and the Princess Alice, there was silence.

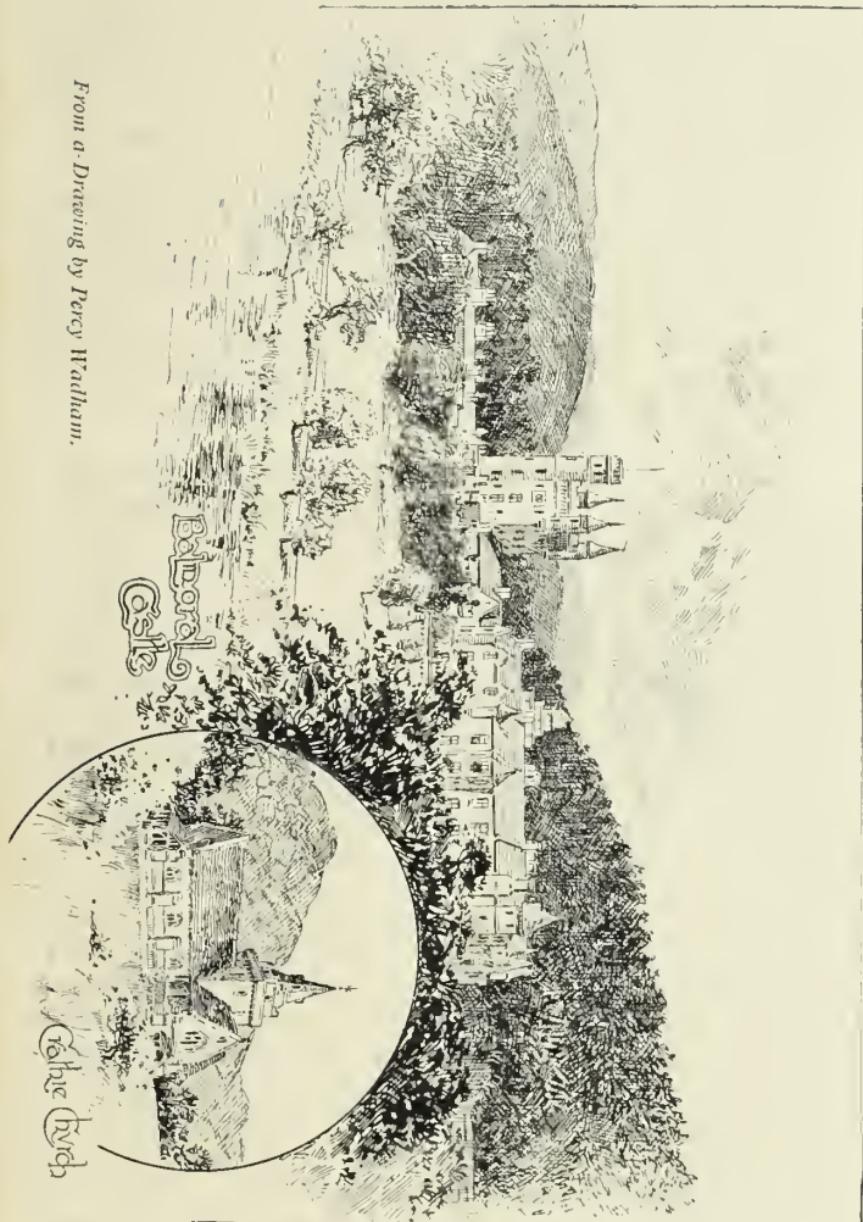
" In the solemn hush of that mournful chamber," writes Sir Theodore Martin, " there was such grief as has rarely hallowed any death-bed. A great light which had blessed the world, and which the mourners had but yesterday hoped might long bless it, was waning fast away. A husband, a father, a friend, a master, endeared by every quality which man in such relations can win the love of his fellow man, was passing into the silent land, and his loving glance, his wise counsels, his firm, manly thoughts should be known among them no more. The castle clock chimed the third quarter after ten. Calm and peaceful grew the beloved form ; the features settled into the beauty of a perfectly serene repose ; two or three long but gentle breaths were drawn ; and that great soul had fled to seek a nobler scope for its aspirations in the world within the veil, for which it had often yearned, where there is rest for the weary, and where the spirits of the just are made perfect."

For a moment so stricken was the Queen with the dreadful blow that had fallen upon her that it almost seemed as if, to quote Mrs. Oliphant, " the most trustworthy of monarchs was about to fail altogether

and end her Royal career upon her husband's grave." It was Princess Alice who, by bringing the infant Beatrice to her mother, first broke the awful spell of grief. Then the Queen was induced (pending the funeral, which took place on December 23rd) to take her children to Osborne. When the news reached Her Majesty of the colliery disaster in Northumberland on January 10th, a disaster involving the death of 202 men and boys, she caused a message of sympathy to be sent to the survivors, together with a sum of £200 towards their relief. Her Majesty commanded Colonel Phipps to say "that her tenderest sympathy is with the poor widows and mothers, and that her own misery only makes her feel the more for them."

On January 11th, 1862, Her Majesty was presiding at a Cabinet Council. In April the Queen, who had read his "In Memoriam," summoned Tennyson to her presence and talked with him of the Prince Consort (whom she compared with the Arthur Hallam of the noble poem) and of her gratitude for her people's kindly sympathy with her in her affliction. Tennyson wrote the inauguration ode for the exhibition which opened in May, and which had been planned by the Prince. At Balmoral in May the Queen derived much solace from her talks with Dr. Norman Macleod. On July 1st at Osborne Princess Alice was married to Prince Louis of Hesse, a wedding which had been looked forward to by her late father. On the 9th she left for Germany, but her heart was ever in England and with her mother, to whom she wrote frequently during the course of her married life. It was her lot to see her sister's husband and her own draw swords on opposing sides in the Austro-Prussian War. In December, speaking to Archbishop Benson, the Queen pathetically but courageously spoke of the necessity of thought on her part now that he who used to think for her always was no more.

From a Drawing by Percy Wadham.



In 1863 she used her influence to prevent a coalition with France on behalf of the Poles, and a year later, it may here be noted, she successfully opposed her ministers and popular feeling and saved the country from war—in this case against Prussia in connection with the Danish claims in Schleswig-Holstein.

On March 10th, 1863, the Prince of Wales was married at Windsor to Princess Alexandra of Denmark. On May 9th the Queen with Princess Alice went to Netley. In one ward a veteran, who was lying on the point of death, said to the Queen after she had spoken to him: “I thank God that He has allowed me to live long enough to see Your Majesty with my own eyes.”

The death in July, by a fall from a tight rope in Aston Park, Birmingham, of the “female Blondin,” caused Her Majesty to express her horror at such demoralising exhibitions, and the hope that they would never be repeated. In October the Queen made her first public appearance as a widow by inaugurating the Albert Memorial at Aberdeen. Her Majesty just prior to this function had been thrown from her carriage by an accident near Balmoral, and much bruised. In December, 1864, a characteristic letter was issued by the Sovereign to the various railway directors, urging that the same security might be insured for all as was so carefully provided for herself. The following year was marked by the death of King Leopold and by the Queen’s visits to Rosenau, to Wellington College (where she could not repress her tears at the memories called forth as she looked at the foundation stone), and to Brompton Hospital.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of Her Majesty’s doings following “sixty-one.” But while humbler England was proud of her faithful sorrow, it grudged her mourning, and rumours were set afloat constantly that Her Majesty was “about to” resume the old life of her married days. The first

place was given in the first number of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, issued on February 7th, 1865, to an article which expressed the hope that the Queen might "come once more face to face with her people" when the new Parliament was called together. In 1866—the year of Princess Helena's marriage to Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein—the Queen did open Parliament in person, but the State robes were laid across the Throne, not worn. And Her Majesty caused the publication of the following striking statement in the *Times* :—

"An erroneous impression seems generally to prevail, and has lately found frequent expression in the newspapers, that the Queen is about to resume the place in society which she occupied before her great affliction ; that is that she is about to hold *levées* and Drawing Rooms in person, and to appear as before at Court balls, concerts, etc. This idea cannot be too explicitly contradicted. The Queen appreciates the desire of her subjects to see her, and whatever she can do to gratify them in this loyal and affectionate wish she will do. Whenever any real object is to be obtained by her appearing on public occasions, any national interest to be promoted, or anything to be encouraged which is for the good of the people, Her Majesty will not shrink, as she has not shrunk, from any personal sacrifice or exertion, however painful. But there are other and higher duties than those of mere representation which are now thrown upon the Queen alone unassisted—duties which she cannot neglect without injury to the public service—which weigh unceasingly upon her, overwhelming her with work and anxiety. The Queen has laboured conscientiously to discharge these duties till her health and strength, already shaken by the bitter and abiding desolation which has taken the place of her former happiness, has been impaired. To call upon her to undergo, in addition, the fatigue of those mere State ceremonies,

which can be equally well performed by other members of her family, is to ask her to run the risk of entirely disabling herself for the discharge of those other duties which cannot be neglected without serious injury to the public interests. The Queen will, however, do what she can—in the manner least trying to her health, strength, and spirits—to meet the loyal wishes of her subjects; to afford that support and countenance to society, and to give that encouragement to trade which is desired of her. More the Queen cannot do; and more the kindness and good feeling of her people will surely not exact of her."

Two years later Mr. John Bright, addressing a meeting of working men and referring to a statement that the Queen was so absorbed in her own grief that she had lost all sympathy with her people, said:—"I am not accustomed to stand up in defence of those who are the possessors of crowns. But I could not sit here and hear that observation without a sensation of wonder and of pain. I think there has been, by many persons, a great injustice done to the Queen in reference to her desolate and widowed position, and I venture to say this, that a woman, be she the Queen of a great realm, or be she the wife of one of your labouring men, who can keep alive in her heart a great sorrow for the lost object of her life and affection is not at all likely to be wanting in a great and generous sympathy with you."

In 1867 the Sultan was the guest of Her Majesty. In the following year Prince Alfred was shot at whilst he was in Sydney, and the uncertainty of the first telegram relating to the occurrence caused the Queen great anxiety. On May 20th the Queen laid the foundation stone of the Royal Albert Hall. Carlyle, who saw the Queen at the house of Dean Stanley, in 1868, wrote of her:—"The Queen came softly forward, a kindly little smile on her face, gently shook hands with all the three women, gently

acknowledged with a nod the silent bows of us male monsters ; and directly in her presence everyone was at ease again. She is a comely little lady, with a pair of kind, clear and intelligent grey eyes ; still looks almost young (in spite of one broad wrinkle which shows on each cheek occasionally) ; is still plump ; has a fine, low voice, soft ; indeed, her whole manner is melodiously perfect. It is impossible to imagine a *politer* little woman ; nothing the least imperious ; all gentle, all sincere, looking unembarrassing—rather attractive even ; makes you feel too (if you have any sense in you) that she is Queen."

In November, 1871, the Prince of Wales was seized with typhoid fever, and Queen and people were filled with alarm. The long vigil at the bedside at Sandringham was shared with the Princess of Wales by Princess Alice. By December 14th the crisis had passed. On December 26th the Queen wrote a letter of thanks to the nation for its sympathy, and as soon as the Prince was well enough he, with his mother and the rest of the Royal family, on February 27th, attended a solemn service of thanksgiving at St. Paul's Cathedral. This service had at first been arranged more as a private act of devotion on the part of the Queen and her household ; but it assumed day by day the proportions of a national festival, which provided what has been called the turning-point in the Prince's life. The text of the Queen's letter just referred to is appended :—

“Windsor Castle,
“December 26th, 1871.

“The Queen is very anxious to express her deep sense of the touching sympathy of the whole nation on the occasion of the alarming illness of her dear son, the Prince of Wales. The universal feeling shown by her people during those painful, terrible days, and the sympathy evinced by them with herself and her beloved daughter, the Princess of Wales,

as well as the general joy in the improvement of the Prince of Wales's state, have made a deep and lasting impression upon her heart, which can never be effaced. It was, indeed, nothing new to her, for the Queen had met with the same sympathy when, just ten years ago, a similar illness removed from her side the best, wisest and kindest of husbands. The Queen wishes to express at the same time, on behalf of the Princess of Wales, her feelings of heartfelt gratitude, for she has been as deeply touched as the Queen by the great and universal manifestations of loyalty and sympathy. The Queen cannot conclude without expressing her hope that her faithful subjects will continue their prayers to God for the complete recovery of her dear son to health and strength."

Following the service in St. Paul's the Queen caused the publication of the following letter:—

“Buckingham Palace,
“February 29th, 1872.

“The Queen is anxious, as on a previous occasion, to express publicly her *own* personal *very deep* sense of the reception she and her dear children met with on Tuesday, February 27th, from millions of her subjects on her way to and from St. Paul's. Words are too weak for the Queen to say how very deeply touched and gratified she has been by the immense enthusiasm and affection exhibited towards her dear son and herself, from the highest down to the lowest, on the long progress through the capital, and she would earnestly wish to convey her warmest and most heartfelt thanks to the whole nation for this great demonstration of loyalty. The Queen, as well as her son and her dear daughter-in-law, felt that the whole nation joined with them in thanking God for sparing the beloved Prince of Wales's life. The remembrance of this day, and of the remarkable order maintained throughout, will for ever be affectionately remembered by the Queen and her family.”

On the day the foregoing was written a lad of eighteen, named Arthur O'Connor, presented an unloaded pistol at the Queen, together with a paper for her to sign. He was in April sentenced to imprisonment and flogging.

CHAPTER XI.—(1872-1901.)

The Queen as Peacemaker—Letters to the Nation—General Gordon's Death—The Two Jubilees—A Roumanian Reminiscence of Balmoral—In Ireland again—The Sovereign and the Transvaal War—The Close of the Record Reign.

TOWARDS the close of March, 1872, the Queen went to Germany for a few weeks, and later in the year the Queen's half-sister and playmate, the Dowager Princess of Hohenlohe, died. On January 23rd, 1874, the Duke of Edinburgh was married to the Grand Duchess Mary of Russia, daughter of Alexander II. On December 3rd the Queen received a testimonial expressing gratitude on behalf of the French nation for British assistance during the Franco-German War. In 1875 the Queen intervened to prevent another war between France and Germany, as appears from a letter written by Prince Bismarck from Varzin on August 13th, in reply to a communication from the Emperor William I. The Emperor, it appears, had sent to his chancellor a letter from the Queen, in which the latter expressed her belief in the truth of the rumours of an approaching German attack upon France. Prince Bismarck, in his reply, wrote:—"It would have been very interesting had Her Majesty expressed herself more definitely as to the origin of these war rumours. Queen Victoria must have implicit confidence in the sources of her information, otherwise Her Majesty would not have referred to them again, nor would the English Government, on the strength of them, have taken such important, and for us so unfriendly, steps in the matter. I am not aware whether your Majesty considers it possible to take Queen Victoria at her word when

Her Majesty gives the assurance that it would be 'an easy matter to prove that her fears are not exaggerated.' It would also be of importance to ascertain from what quarter such extraordinary mistakes could have been transmitted to Windsor. The allusions to persons who are to be looked upon as 'representatives' of your Majesty's Government appear to refer to Count Münster. It is quite possible that Count Münster, like Count Moltke, may academically have spoken of the advantage of a well-timed attack on France, though I am not aware of his having done so, nor did he ever receive instructions to that effect. It may well be that it is not conducive to peace for France to feel assured that, do what she may, she will in no circumstances be attacked. To-day I would no more urge your Majesty than in the Luxemburg question, in 1867, immediately to wage war on the ground that it was probable that the enemy was about to begin. One can never be sure enough in advance of the ways of Divine Providence. On the other hand, it is certainly not expedient to give the enemy an assurance that we should wait his attack in all circumstances. On this account I should not be inclined to blame Count Münster should he incidentally have spoken to this effect, and the English Government would have no right to make the unofficial utterances of an ambassador the pretext for official measures and, without a word of warning, to request the other Powers to bring pressure to bear upon us. So serious and unfriendly a proceeding leads one to suppose that Queen Victoria has had other reasons to believe in warlike intentions than incidental phrases said to have been used by Count Münster, but which I do not for a moment believe. Lord Odo Russell has assured us that on every occasion he has expressed his firm belief in our peaceable intentions. On the other hand, all ultramontanes and their friends have accused us

privately and openly in the Press of being desirous of immediate war, and the French Ambassador, who lives in such circles, has sent these fabrications to Paris as trustworthy information. But even this would not suffice to inspire Queen Victoria with confidence in the untruths mentioned in her letter of June 20th after they had been personally denied by your Majesty. I am too little acquainted with the characteristics of Queen Victoria to form an opinion as to whether it is possible that the expression 'it would be an easy matter to prove' was only employed for the purpose of concealing instead of openly acknowledging precipitancy of judgment."

When the foregoing letter was published in Berlin for the first time, on August 27th, 1876, a Radical paper reminded its readers that Prince Bismarck told an interviewer in 1872 that the General Staff, with the excellent Moltke as its head, differed from him in 1875, and was of opinion that as, once for all, France wanted war, it was necessary to anticipate her before she was prepared. Bismarck told him that Moltke and Radowitz had openly declared at table that Germany would only make war on France, and added that he (Bismarck) then at last persuaded the King decidedly to forbid the General Staff interfering with the business of the Foreign Office.

In 1877 Her Majesty used her influence towards ending the Russo-Turkish War. The year 1878 will always be held in sad remembrance as the year in which, on the anniversary of her father's death, Princess Alice succumbed to diphtheria at Darmstadt, after nursing her husband and children, who were attacked by the terrible affliction. The death of the Princess was the occasion of the following message from the Queen to the nation:—

"Osborne,

"December 26th, 1878.

"The Queen is anxious to take the earliest opportunity of expressing publicly her heartfelt thanks for

the universal and most touching sympathy shown to her by all classes of her loyal and faithful subjects on the present occasion, when it has pleased God to call from this world her dearly beloved daughter, the Princess Alice, Grand Duchess of Hesse. Overwhelmed with grief at the loss of a dear child, who was a bright example of loving tenderness, courageous devotion, and self-sacrifice to duty, it is most soothing to the Queen's feelings to see how entirely her grief is shared by her people. The Queen's deeply afflicted son-in-law, the Grand Duke of Hesse, is also anxious to make known his sincere gratitude for the kind feelings expressed towards himself and his dear children in their terrible bereavement, and his gratification at the appreciation shown by the people of England of the noble and endearing qualities of her whom all now mourn. Seventeen years ago, at this very time, when a similar bereavement crushed the Queen's happiness, and this beloved and lamented daughter was her great comfort and support, the nation evinced the same touching sympathy, as well as when, in December, 1871, the Prince of Wales was at the point of death, such an exhibition of true and tender feeling ever remain engraven on the Queen's heart, and is more to be valued at this moment of great distress in the country, which no one more deeply deplores than the Queen herself."

Edward Byrne Madden was, on December 12th, 1878, arrested for sending threatening letters to the Queen, and judged insane. On March 13th, 1879, the Duke of Connaught and Princess Mary of Prussia were married. The assassination of President Garfield in 1881 drew a letter of sympathy from the Queen, which did not a little towards improving Anglo-American relations. In 1882 Her Majesty, travelling as "Countess of Balmoral," paid the first of a series of annual visits to the Riviera, opened Epping Forest as a public resort, and opened

the New Law Courts in London. On March 10th she was, at Windsor, shot at by Roderick McLean, and two days later Her Majesty issued a letter of thanks for the sympathy evoked by the outrage. On April 27th Prince Leopold was married to Princess Helena, of Waldeck and Pyrmont. In 1883 died the Queen's "devoted personal attendant and faithful friend," John Brown, the late Prince Consort's favourite gillie. In the following year, on March 28th the Sovereign experienced a crushing blow by the sudden death of Prince Leopold. The loss was referred to by Her Majesty in the following letter to her people:—

"Windsor Castle, April 14th, 1884.

"I have on several previous occasions given personal expression to my deep sense of the loving sympathy and loyalty of my subjects in all parts of my empire. I wish, therefore, in my present grievous bereavement to thank them most warmly for the very gratifying manner in which they have shown not only their sympathy with me and my dear, so deeply afflicted daughter-in-law and my other children, but also their high appreciation of my beloved son's great qualities of head and heart, and of the loss he is to the country and to me. The affectionate sympathy of my loyal people, which has never failed me in weal or woe is very soothing to my heart. Though much shaken and sorely afflicted by the many sorrows and trials which have fallen upon me, during these past years, I will not lose courage, and with the help of Him who has never forsaken me will strive to labour on for the sake of my children, and for the good of the country I love so well, as long as I can. My dear daughter-in-law, the Duchess of Albany, who bears her terrible misfortune with the most admirable, touching and unmurmuring resignation to the will of God, is also deeply gratified by the universal sympathy and kind feeling evinced towards her. I would wish in

conclusion to express my gratitude to all other countries for their sympathy—above all to the neighbouring one where my beloved son breathed his last, and for the great respect and kindness shown on that mournful occasion.

VICTORIA, R.I."

On the news reaching Her Majesty of Gordon's tragic death in the Soudan the Queen wrote to his sister:—

" Osborne, February 17th, 1885.

" DEAR MISS GORDON,—*How* shall I write to you, or how shall I attempt to express *what I feel*? To think of your dear, noble, heroic brother, who served his country and his Queen so truly, so heroically, with a self-sacrifice so deifying to the world, not having been rescued! That the promises of support were not fulfilled—which I so frequently and constantly pressed on those who asked him to go—is to me *grief inexpressible*! indeed it has made me ill. My heart bleeds for you, his sister, who have gone through so many anxieties on his account, and who loved the dear brother as he deserved to be. You are all so good and trustful, and have such strong faith, that you will be sustained even now when *real* absolute evidence of your dear brother's death does not exist—but I fear there cannot be much doubt of it. Some day I hope to see you again to tell you all I cannot express. My daughter Beatrice, who has felt quite as I do, wishes me to express her deepest sympathy from *abroad*; from my eldest daughter the Crown Princess, and from my cousin the King of the Belgians, the very warmest. Would you express to your other sisters and your elder brother my true sympathy, and what I do so keenly feel—the *stain* left upon England for your dear brother's cruel, though heroic, fate?

" Ever, dear Miss Gordon,

" Yours sincerely and sympathisingly,

" V.R.I."

A few weeks later Miss Gordon presented her brother's Bible to the Queen. The Queen thus acknowledged the gift, which now lies opened in an enamel and crystal casket at Windsor :—

“ Windsor Castle,

“ March 16th, 1885.

“ DEAR MISS GORDON,—It is most kind and good of you to give me this precious Bible, and I only hope that you are not depriving yourself and family of such a treasure, if you have no other. May I ask you during how many years your dear heroic brother had it with him? I shall have a case made for it with an inscription, and place it in the library here, with your letter and the touching extract from his last to you. I have ordered, as you know, a marble bust of your dear brother to be placed in the corridor here, where so many busts and pictures of our greatest generals and statesmen are, and hope that you will see it before it is finished, to give your opinion as to the likeness.

“ Believe me always,

“ Yours very sincerely,

“ VICTORIA, R.I.”

On July 23rd, 1885, the Princess Beatrice was married at Whippingham to Prince Henry of Battenberg, to which event the Queen makes tender references in a letter to Lord Tennyson. In 1886 the Queen opened the Indian and Colonial Exhibition in London, and exhibitions in Liverpool and Edinburgh.

Queen's weather and Queen's order were with the universal enthusiasm of her subjects throughout the world characteristic of Jubilee Year, 1887. Two functions stand out in the memory: the Opening of the People's Palace in the East End of London, and the Thanksgiving Service in Westminster Abbey. In the prayer recited by Archbishop Benson thanks were given that in sorrow and in joy the Queen had

always possessed the hearts of her people. Here is the text of Her Majesty's acknowledgment of her people's greetings:—

“Windsor Castle,
“June 24th, 1887.

“I am anxious to express to my people my warm thanks for the kind, and more than kind reception I met with on going to, and returning from, Westminster Abbey with all my children and grandchildren. The enthusiastic reception I met with then, as well as on these eventful days, in London as well as in Windsor, on the occasion of my Jubilee, has touched me most deeply. It has shown that the labours and anxiety of fifty long years, twenty-two of which I spent in unclouded happiness, shared and cheered by my beloved husband, while an equal number were full of sorrows and trials borne without his sheltering arm and wise help, have been appreciated by my people. This feeling, and the sense of duty towards my dear country and subjects, who are so inseparably bound up with my life, will encourage me in my task—often a very difficult and arduous one—during the remainder of my life. The wonderful order preserved on this occasion, and the good behaviour of the enormous multitudes assembled, merits my highest admiration. That God may protect and abundantly bless my country is my fervent prayer.

“VICTORIA R.I.”

Sorrow came fast in the steps of rejoicing. In March, 1888, William I. died, and three months later the Queen's eldest daughter was left a widow. In 1889 the Queen visited Wales. In 1890 Her Majesty entertained her grandson the Kaiser, and the Queen of Roumania.

The Queen of Roumania's private secretary, M. Scheffer, who accompanied her to Balmoral, afterwards in a Paris paper gave an account of his

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stay there. A Highland dance was given in honour of "Carmen Sylva." The writer was looking on, when suddenly he felt the attraction of a human presence behind him, and in spite of himself he turned back. "Leaning on a tall stick, a gentle face under white hair, dressed in mourning—it was Queen Victoria, who attended the war-like pantomime unexpected, still and silent. She looked like a fairy of the awe-inspiring sort, so different from her portraits, from the sad countenance she has in public. She advanced towards the door with a wonderfully elastic step, and as she spoke to me, her clear eye fixed upon me, I had the feeling that short in stature as she was, I was dwarfed by her presence. The Queen wore at dinner the splendid diamonds given by the City of Bombay. She sat still and silent at the upper end of the table, with her Indian servants behind her like a picture of the early Italian religious painters. The guests, however, spoke to each other without the least restraint. My neighbour at table, the Princess Beatrice, hummed a tune, played on the chapel organ and asked me whether I knew it. Private conversation soon became general. The Duke of Clarence in an undertone makes some remarks to his young sister, very girlishly beautiful in pink and white, and who, keeping very stiffly in her chair, is choking with an effort to suppress her laughter. The dining-room is of almost Puritan simplicity. The dinner service is plain but in perfect taste. The Sovereign casts a quiet and kindly look over the table where humble guests sit beside Royalties without any regard to etiquette. . . . The room where we adjourn after dinner is hung with Scotch hangings, rather crude to our eyes accustomed to more subdued tones. Art is perhaps banished from this room as it is in a general way from the Castle. You feel that the lady who lives here thinks of something else than arabesque bric-à-brac, or silks and satins. During

the conversation with which I was honoured by Her Majesty, I again felt this curious sensation of being subdued by that little woman who, leaning with both hands on her stick, looked up to me." When the Queen of Roumania was leaving the Castle and had entered her carriage, "suddenly and altogether unexpectedly the black fairy with white hair, Queen Victoria, appeared. A little trembling, and her eyes filled with tears, she hastened to the carriage, and a last time with motherly kindness embraced the exquisite Sovereign who had won her heart."

A glimpse is given in the "Life of Archbishop Benson," of the serious side of Her Majesty's thoughts in 1890. The topic of a letter to the Primate was a vacant bishopric, and Her Majesty was most emphatic in asserting the paramount necessity of an appointment being made not to satisfy this or that section of the ecclesiastical world, but on account of sterling work.

On January 14th, 1892, occurred the death of Prince Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence, eldest son of the Prince of Wales, on the eve of his marriage to Princess May of Teck. How greatly the Queen felt her grandson's death is witnessed by her pathetic letter to the nation:—

"Windsor Castle,

"January 20th, 1892.

"I must once again give expression to my deep sense of the loyalty and affectionate sympathy evinced by my subjects in every part of my Empire on an occasion more sad and tragical than any but one which has befallen me and mine as well as the nation. The overwhelming misfortune of my dearly loved grandson having thus been suddenly cut off in the flower of his age, full of promise for the future, amiable and gentle, and endearing himself to all, renders it hard for his sorely-stricken parents, his dear young bride, and his fond grandmother to bow

in submission to the inscrutable decrees of Providence. The sympathy of millions, which has been so touchingly and kindly expressed, is deeply gratifying at such a time, and I wish both in my own name and in that of my children to express from my heart my warm gratitude to *all*. These testimonies of sympathy with us and appreciation of my dear grandson, whom I loved as a son, and whose devotion to me was as great as that of a son, will be a help and consolation to me and mine in our affliction. My bereavements during the last thirty years of my reign have indeed been heavy. Though the labours, anxieties, and responsibilities, inseparable from my position, have been great, yet it is my earnest prayer that God may give me health and strength to work for the good and happiness of my dear country and Empire while life lasts.

“VICTORIA, R.I.”

One of the most touching tributes of sympathy that reached the Queen in her sorrow was the address of “the Oaks’ Widows,” widows of men who perished in an explosion at the Oaks Colliery, near Barnsley, in 1866.

In formally opening the Imperial Institute, on May 10th, 1893, the Queen, in reply to an address read by the Prince of Wales, made a statement which contained these significant words:—“I concur with you in thinking that the counsel and exertions of my beloved husband initiated a movement which gave increased vigour to commercial activity, and produced marked and lasting improvements in industrial efforts. One indirect result of that movement has been to bring more before the minds of men the vast and varied resources of the Empire over which Providence has willed that I should reign during fifty prosperous years. I believe and hope that the Imperial Institute will play a useful part in combining those resources for the

common advantage of all my subjects, and conducting towards the welding of the Colonies, India and the Mother Country into one harmonious and united community."

Referring to the marriage on July 6th, 1893, of the younger brother of the late Duke of Clarence, Prince George, Duke of York, to Princess May of Teck, the *Times* eloquently said:—"Few Royal weddings of our time have aroused such universal enthusiasm as the union of the Duke of York with the bride of his choice—an English Princess, born and bred in an English home, endeared to all hearts by the now softened memory of a tragic sorrow and richly endowed with all the qualities which inspire the brightest hopes for the future." London of its own accord made the event a general holiday, and no mishap of any kind marred the occasion. The Home Secretary was commanded by the Queen to make the appended message public:—

"Windsor Castle,

"July 10th, 1893.

"The Queen wishes once again to express to her people how much gratified and touched she has been by the great loyalty and devotion to herself and family which have been so strikingly evinced on the occasion of the marriage of her beloved grandson, the Duke of York, and his dear bride, Princess Victoria Mary of Teck. It is, indeed, nothing new to the Queen, for in weal or woe she has ever met with the warmest and kindest sympathy, which she feels very deeply. She knows that the peoples of her vast Empire are aware how truly her heart beats for them in all their joys or sorrows, and that in the existence of this tie between them and herself lies the real strength of the Empire. With them the Queen joins in the warmest prayer and wishes for the welfare and happiness of her dear grandchildren.

"VICTORIA, R.I."

The next letter from the Queen to the nation was marked by grief, and was drawn forth by the death from fever contracted in Ashanti of Prince Henry of Battenberg :—

“ Osborne,

“ February 14th, 1896.

“ I have, alas! once more to thank my loyal subjects for their warm sympathy in a fresh grievous affliction which has befallen me and my beloved daughter Princess Beatrice, Princess Henry of Battenberg. This new sorrow is overwhelming, and to me is a double one, for I lose a dearly beloved and helpful son, whose presence was like a bright sunbeam in my home, and my dear daughter loses a noble, devoted husband, to whom she was united by the closest affection. To witness the blighted happiness of the daughter who has never left me, and has comforted and helped me, is hard to bear. But the feeling of universal sympathy so touchingly shown by all classes of my subjects has deeply moved my child and myself, and has helped and soothed us greatly. I wish from my heart to thank my people for this as well as for the appreciation manifested of the dear and gallant Prince who laid down his life in the service of his adopted country. My beloved child is an example to all in her courage, resignation, and submission to the will of God.

“ VICTORIA, R.I.”

The Queen on June 20th, 1897, completed the sixtieth year of her reign. The Diamond Jubilee was celebrated throughout the Empire and in many foreign countries with an enthusiasm before which memory of the joy of 1887 faded as moonlight before sunlight. The whole year was given up to functions of a jubilant or commemorative nature, and presents poured in upon Her Majesty, and deputations came to do her honour from all the corners of the earth. Nearly all the memorials that we

have of that time are in the form of philanthropic institutions. The Queen prepared for the ideal of the great day by staying quietly at Cimiez, a spot sharing with Florence and Bordighera, the favour of Her Majesty in connection with her annual spring visit to the Continent. Early in the year the Prince of Wales instituted a great Hospital Fund as a permanent memorial of "the longest reign." The Princess of Wales started a fund for the purpose of enabling the poorest of the Queen's subjects to participate in the pleasures of the event that was being celebrated. On June 20th there were thanksgiving services in all the places of worship in the kingdom. That at St. Georges's Chapel, Windsor, was attended by Her Majesty. On July 22nd the Queen with her family—she had just, by the way, heard of the birth of her thirtieth great-grandchild—and attended by delegates and detachments of troops from India and the Colonies, and dependences of the Crown, made a triumphal progress from Buckingham Palace to St. Paul's, and returned thence by the south side of the river. As Her Majesty left the Palace she touched an electric button, and the signal was given for the transmission to all the centres of the Empire these words: "From my heart I thank my beloved people. May God bless them!" Without the Cathedral, on a spot now marked by a graven stone, the Queen returned thanks to Almighty God. On June 25th, the Prince of Wales reviewed the fleet at Spithead. On June 28th, Her Majesty held a great garden party at Buckingham Palace. On July 1st, the Queen reviewed 30,000 troops at Aldershot, the Indian and Colonial sections being invited to Windsor, as were the members of the House of Commons.

The most famous demonstration within the memory of modern Europe was formally, if not actually, brought to a close by the letter addressed by the Queen-Empress to her people, a letter which,

it was remarked at the time, disposed once and for all in definite and pathetic words of the always painful but in these latter years often referred to idea of her abdication:—

“Windsor Castle,

“July 15th, 1897.

“I have frequently expressed my personal feelings to my people, and though on this memorable occasion there have been many official expressions of my deep sense of the unbounded loyalty evinced, I cannot rest satisfied without personally giving utterance to these sentiments. It is difficult for me on this occasion to say how truly touched and grateful I am for the spontaneous and universal outburst of loyal attachment and real affection which I have experienced on the completion of the sixtieth year of my reign. During my progress through London on June 22nd, this great enthusiasm was shown in the most striking manner, and can never be effaced from my heart. It is indeed deeply gratifying after so many years of labour and anxiety for the good of my beloved country to find that my exertions have been appreciated throughout my vast Empire. In weal and woe I have ever had the true sympathy of all my people, which has been warmly reciprocated by myself. It has given me unbounded pleasure to see so many of my subjects from all parts of the world assembled here, and to find them joining in the acclamations of loyal devotion to myself, and I would wish to thank them all from the depth of my grateful heart. I shall ever pray God to bless them, and to enable me still to discharge my duties for their welfare so long as life lasts.

“VICTORIA, R.I.”

In his “Recessional,” a poem printed by the *Times* at the foot of the Queen’s letter, Mr. Rudyard Kipling uttered a word of memorable warning. “All our pomp of yesterday,” he wrote, “Is one with

Nineveh and Tyre," and appealing to the Judge of Nations to "be with us yet," the poet prayed—

" If drunk with sight of power, we loose
 Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe,
Such boasting as the Gentiles use
 Or lesser breeds without the Law.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
 Lest we forget—Lest we forget."

The Queen, when Mr. Gladstone died in May, 1898, wrote a letter, full of tender womanly sympathy, to his widow. The accident to the Prince of Wales, who fell and fractured his left kneecap at Waddesdon in July, was a source of anxiety to the Queen and the nation. In August came the Tsar's famous rescript in favour of disarmament, to the tenour of which, as the Tsar shared with the Emperor William the honour of being the recipient of Her Majesty's closest confidences, the Queen must have known long before its promulgation. November found the Sovereign at Netley comforting the invalids from the Soudan. Just a year later Her Majesty inspected the Household Cavalry on its departure for South Africa, and her efforts in support of the various agencies for the care of the troops in the Transvaal recalled the memorable days of the Crimean War. In December she decided to forward to every soldier in the field a personal gift, which took the form of a box of chocolate. Many a romance is attached to this simple but dearly cherished gift. Memory too will fondly linger over the story of the visit paid by Her Majesty on her eightieth birthday to old Kensington Palace, which she then gave to the nation.

In March, 1900, Her Majesty came once more amongst the people of the capital, who cheered her as she drove through the city and at night time assembled outside Buckingham Palace and sang the National Anthem. In April, after an interval of nearly forty years, the Queen stepped upon Irish

soil and felt again at her heart the warmth of the loyalty of her Irish subjects, many of whom, as Her Majesty tenderly acknowledged, were then laying down their lives for her cause on the South African veldt. On leaving Dublin the Queen left £1000 for distribution amongst the poor and a letter of gratitude for her reception, in which she "earnestly prayed" that "goodwill and harmony may prevail amongst all her people, and that they may be happy and prosperous." Her Majesty commanded the wearing of the dear little shamrock on St. Patrick's Day and in honour of the brave Irishmen who had fallen in the Transvaal sanctioned the formation of an Irish Regiment of Foot Guards. When the Crimean War broke out Canada sent a contingent. New South Wales had followed the Canadian example at the time of the troubles in the Soudan. In 1900, troops rallied to the Imperial Standard from all parts of the Empire, and as representatives of the men returned via England they were given the personal "God speed" of the Queen at Windsor.

Whilst her heart bled for the brave men who had been cut down in their prime in the course of the war the Queen's cup of sorrow was embittered by the sudden death of her second son, Duke Alfred of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha; the death, at the front, of her grandson, Prince Christian Victor; and the illness of her eldest daughter, the Empress Frederic.

Very happily expressed are the thoughts in Mr. A. C. Benson's lines, "To Her Majesty the Queen," wherewith the new *Imperial and Colonial Magazine* made its *début* in November, 1900. The magazine appeared appropriately on the eve of the inauguration of the great Federation of the Southern Cross. What a contrast was now presented between the close of the 18th and that of the 19th century where Britons were concerned. Confine the view to the condition then and now of these islands alone, and the contrast afforded is almost overpowering. Well

might Mr. Benson, pondering past and present, and what “one mortal life” had done since 1837, declare of the Sovereign :—

“Therefore thy throne is as a steadfast star
That burns benignant in the brow of Night ;
Therefore thy myriad children near and far
Trust in thy Love and glory in thy Light.”

During the whole of 1900, amidst the multitude of trials through which the nation then passed, there were fitful rumours that the Queen’s health left something to be desired. But official chroniclers told many a flattering tale; and Her Majesty’s subjects, one and all, having come to regard the Sovereign, with whose name most of them had been familiar as that of the Queen from their childhood, as gifted with powers well-nigh supernatural, believed that which their hearts needed to believe for their well-being. But public grief was all the while tearing her heart. Private grief was ever with her, also. The illness of her first-born, the Empress Frederic, who was once near to the ever open doors of death, caused her the deepest anxiety. The sad death in South Africa of her grandson Prince Christian Victor affected her deeply. When on Christmas morning the news reached her of the sudden death of the Dowager Lady Churchill, whose rare privilege it was to be a personal friend of the Queen, Her Majesty’s cup of sorrow seemed to be drained to the bitterest dregs. How, as the first month of the new century dragged slowly on, the Queen’s anxiety increased as the good news expected from the Cape came not, but bad in its place, may be gauged by the repeated visits of Lord Roberts to Osborne. Those nearest to the Throne spoke in whispers of their fears, of the great need of rest and sleep for the revered Head of the Empire. It appears, too, that quite early in January the Queen was delegating more than one duty which she usually insisted upon performing herself to other



QUEEN VICTORIA IN A COTTAGE HOME



hands. Meanwhile, irresponsible gossip spoke noisily of a spring visit to the Riviera. The accustomed service in the Chapel on Christmas Day was not attended by the Queen, a shortened service being held in the private apartments at Osborne. On New Year's Day, however, with a fidelity reminiscent of nothing so much as the Prince Consort's devotion to the calls of what he conceived to be his duty in the days immediately preceding the development of his fatal illness, Her Majesty visited the Sailors' Home to inquire into the welfare of the inmates newly arrived there from South Africa. On January 8th, through Sir Fleetwood Edwards, the Queen expressed to Lord Balfour of Burleigh the distress with which she had heard of the sad accident to the fishing boats off the Shetlands and the consequent sorrow and suffering in many poor families. Sir Fleetwood wrote:—"I am commanded to convey the expression of Her Majesty's deep sympathy with the bereaved, and to ask you to be good enough to forward the enclosed cheque for £20 as a donation from the Queen to any fund that may be raised in their behalf."

On Friday morning, January 18th, alarming rumours were current relative to the Queen's health. By night these had developed into positive warnings given in certain circles where the worst was feared. The following day—that on which by some strange fate Her Majesty attained the age of 81 years 240 days, or one day more than the age reached by her grandfather George III. at his death in 1820—was one of profound gloom, caused by the appearance in the morning papers of the following abstracts from the *Court Circular*. The division between the two paragraphs was generally regarded as a hopeless sign:—

“ Osborne, Jan. 18th.—The Queen has not lately been in her usual health, and is unable for the present to take her customary drives.”

“ Osborne, Jan. 18th (Later).—The Queen, during the past year has had a great strain upon her powers, which has rather told upon Her Majesty's nervous system. It has, therefore, been thought advisable by Her Majesty's physicians that the Queen should be kept perfectly quiet in the house, and should abstain for the present from transacting business.”

The appended “diary” is a compilation from the *Court Circular* of the preceding week:—

“ SATURDAY, Jan. 12th.—The Queen drove out, accompanied by Princess Christian.”

“ SUNDAY.—Her Majesty was present at Divine service at Osborne. The Queen drove out in the afternoon.”

“ MONDAY.—The Queen went out, accompanied by Princess Christian and Princess Henry of Battenberg. Earl Roberts had an audience of Her Majesty, and stayed at Osborne for the night.”

“ TUESDAY.—The Queen drove out, accompanied by the Duchess of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha.”

“ WEDNESDAY.—No drive recorded.”

“ THURSDAY.—No *Court Circular* received in London.”

At noon on the Saturday the issue of the following bulletin added to the tension of public feeling:—

“ Osborne, Jan. 19th (noon).—The Queen is suffering from great physical prostration, accompanied by symptoms that cause anxiety.—Signed, R. DOUGLAS POWELL, M.D.; JAMES REID, M.D.”

While telegrams witnessing world-wide apprehension of coming loss came to the heart of the Empire from all its wardens, East, West, and South—indeed, from representatives of all parts of the

civilised world—the tape machines in the printing offices in Fleet Street were ticking off the intelligence of the rapid journeyings of all members of the Royal Family to Osborne. The Duke of Connaught was summoned in haste from Berlin, where he was representing his Royal mother in the Prussian Bi-centenary celebrations. The Kaiser, on hearing the grave news, on the instant gave a signal proof of his devotion to and reverence for his grandmother. He cancelled the Court receptions that had been planned, and set out for Osborne. His Majesty is reported to have said:—"I am my grandmother's eldest grandson, and my mother is unable from illness to hasten to her bedside."

At 6 p.m. on Saturday a further bulletin brought some measure of relief to Her Majesty's subjects:—

"The Queen's strength has been fairly maintained through the day and there are indications of a slight improvement in the symptoms this evening."

The relief, however, was short lived. At noon on Sunday Sir J. Reid and Sir R. D. Powell reported:—

"The Queen has passed a somewhat restless night. There is no material change in Her Majesty's condition since the last report."

At five o'clock a bulletin was issued saying:—

"Her Majesty's strength has been fairly maintained through the day. Although no fresh developments have taken place, the symptoms continue to cause anxiety."

At midnight the physicians reported:—

"The Queen's condition has, late this evening, become more serious, with increased weakness and diminished powers of taking nourishment."

By a mournful coincidence Sunday was the fifth anniversary of the death of Prince Henry of

Battenberg, of whose wedding at Whippingham Her Majesty wrote to the late Laureate one of the most touching letters she ever penned.

If one may take a single instance of public feeling as representative, the scene at Charing Cross Station on the Sunday, when the Kaiser was met on his arrival by the Prince of Wales, is the one that may well be cited. There are few things more impressive than a silent crowd. At Charing Cross the people stood with uncovered heads, mute, as son received grandson. Within every church in the Empire on that day earnest voices were lifted in prayer that the life of the great Queen and Mother of her people might be spared yet a little longer to her afflicted subjects in that their hour of trial.

Within the city, as in its suburbs, on the Monday business was almost at a standstill. Without the Mansion House a great crowd gathered, trying to read hope between the lines as well as in the words of the 11 o'clock bulletin which was there posted. The message bore three signatures, the third being that of Sir Thomas Barlow, the specialist in cerebral affections:—

“ The Queen has slightly rallied since midnight. Her Majesty has taken more food and has had some refreshing sleep. There is no further loss of strength. The symptoms that give rise to the most anxiety are those which point to a local obstruction in the brain circulation.”

The writer of these lines had occasion to leave London early in the afternoon for a spot some sixteen miles out. All along the line, anxiety to learn “ the latest ” was painfully manifest. All the morning papers had been eagerly bought up. At the station at which the writer alighted, the supply of the evening papers had been exhausted, and passengers were met outside the gates with verbal

requests for the most recent information from London. In some cases private telegrams from the city were displayed in the shop windows. Already local functions had been suspended, and the case here was the case everywhere. As night drew on, and the blossoming stars, "the forget-me-nots of the angels," looked on the world below, the sky as one looked towards London town was strangely and luridly coloured as if presaging some pending storm.

On Monday all the Queen's sons and daughters—save the Empress Frederic—were gathered round her. The Bishop of Winchester was summoned to Osborne House from Whippingham Rectory soon after midnight, and offered prayer in the Queen's apartment. As the day lengthened the outside world became aware of the anxious vigil that had been kept by the bedside during the trying hours of the chill outer darkness. At 5 p.m. the doctors stated:—

"The slight improvement of this morning is maintained."

Here are the words of the midnight bulletin, signed by the three physicians already named:—

"There is no material change in the Queen's condition. The slight improvement of the morning has been maintained throughout the day. Food has been taken fairly well, and some tranquil sleep secured."

Side by side with the news that "The Queen still lives," a writer in one of the morning papers thus happily expressed the universal feeling:—"The sharpest pang in all our hearts is the thought that, for the first time in the long Victorian age, she who gave it that great and everlasting name is beyond aid from all our loyalty and love. Her word, of course, could reveal them at any time, as among the mightiest of human forces, and we have never felt until now that with all our devotion for Her Majesty

anything was impossible. The popular instinct of her subjects, nevertheless, clings at heart to an impressive and indeed invincible trust that even yet, in spite of all apprehensions and appearances, the almost mysterious good fortune that has accompanied the Queen's career will still wonderfully attend her, to raise her up once again and spare her to us still."

As she who gave her people peace lay lingering upon the dim confines of the unknown land, the voice of international animosity was hushed. The press of Paris couched long and appreciative references to Albion's Sovereign in tones of chivalry and sympathy. The French Chamber, on assembling, resolved unanimously that the sitting should be suspended immediately, as a token of mourning and sympathy with Great Britain, should the news that all was over come from Osborne. In all the European capitals this sentiment of reverence and grief found sincere expression. In both Houses of the American Legislature special prayers for the Queen's recovery were offered up. In India, at the Cape, in Canada, in Australia, in all the connections and dependencies of the Crown the sorrow was as deep as that in the heart of the Empire.

The end came on Tuesday. Early in the morning all reason for hope seemed to have fled. The story cannot more impressively be told than by the simple recital of the words of the bulletins:—

“ 8 a.m.—The Queen this morning shows signs of diminishing strength, and Her Majesty's condition again assumes a more serious aspect.”

“ 12 noon.—There is no change for the worse in the Queen's condition since this morning's bulletin. Her Majesty has recognised the several members of the Royal family who are here. The Queen is now asleep.”

“ 4 p.m.—The Queen is slowly sinking.”

“ 6.45 p.m.—Her Majesty the Queen breathed her last at 6.30 p.m., surrounded by her children and her grandchildren.”

It is not our intention to dwell upon the sorrowful scene in the chamber of death. But there are some facts made known that helped to assuage the national sorrow. The passing away was, as the Queen's life was, infinitely touching and beautiful. Her Majesty enjoyed many intervals of consciousness during the day, when, with loving look, she recognised those of her grief-stricken children whose lot it was to render to their dying mother the last sad offices that human hands can perform and human skill suggest. The Queen apparently suffered no pain. As the end drew near Her Majesty fell into a slumber peaceful and beautiful to behold. As the last gentle breaths were drawn the Bishop of Winchester, Chaplain of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, commended to the Divine mercy and keeping the spirit that, from the strain and stress of the longest reign, sped to its Maker, and, as one has said, “ the long peace and splendour of an incomparable epoch was merged in tender and immortal memory with all the ancient glory of this land, by the most softly gentle, touching beautiful death scene of which our history holds record.”

An “extraordinary” number of the *London Gazette*, published at night, contained the following:—

“ Whitehall, Jan. 22nd, 1901.—A bulletin, of which the following is a copy, has been received by Mr. Secretary Ritchie:—
‘ Osborne, 7.8 p.m., Jan. 22nd, 1901, 6.45 p.m.—Her Majesty the Queen breathed her last at 6.30 p.m., surrounded by her children and grandchildren. (Signed)
JAMES REID, R. DOUGLAS POWELL,
THOMAS BARLOW.’ ”

APPENDIX.

THE QUEEN'S PRIME MINISTERS AND THEIR TERMS OF OFFICE.

TOOK OFFICE.			REMAINED IN OFFICE.
18 April, 1835	VISCOUNT MELBOURNE	-	6 years 141 days
6 Sept., 1841	SIR ROBERT PEEL	-	4 , , 303 "
6 July, 1846	LORD JOHN RUSSELL	-	5 , , 236 "
27 Feb., 1852	EARL OF DERBY	-	0 , , 305 "
28 Dec., 1852	EARL OF ABERDEEN	-	2 , , 44 "
10 Feb., 1855	LORD PALMERSTON	-	3 , , 15 "
25 Feb., 1858	EARL OF DERBY	-	1 , , 113 "
18 June, 1859	LORD PALMERSTON	-	6 , , 141 "
6 Nov., 1865	EARL RUSSELL	-	0 , , 242 "
6 July, 1866	EARL OF DERBY	-	1 , , 236 "
27 Feb., 1868	BENJAMIN DISRAELI	-	0 , , 286 "
9 Dec., 1868	W. E. GLADSTONE	-	5 , , 74 "
21 Feb., 1874	B. DISRAELI (EARL OF BEACONSFIELD)	-	6 , , 67 "
28 April, 1880	W. E. GLADSTONE	-	5 , , 57 "
24 June, 1885	MARQUIS OF SALISBURY	0	, , 227 "
6 Feb., 1886	W. E. GLADSTONE	-	0 , , 178 "
3 Aug., 1886	MARQUIS OF SALISBURY	6	, , 15 "
18 Aug., 1892	W. E. GLADSTONE	-	1 , , 197 "
3 March, 1894	EARL OF ROSEBURY	-	1 , , 121 "
2 July, 1895	MARQUIS OF SALISBURY	5	, , 87 "
Nov., 1900	MARQUIS OF SALISBURY		

*The Fifteenth Parliament of Queen Victoria assembled on
December 3rd, 1900.*



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